

THE LIFE OF
THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH

EDWARD THOMAS

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DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH

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John, Duke of Marlborough
After I. Closterman, 1705

Frontispiece.

THE
LIFE OF THE DUKE
OF MARLBOROUGH

By
EDWARD THOMAS

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TO
THOMAS SECCOMBE

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I: JACK CHURCHILL

JOHAN CHURCHILL, afterwards Earl, and then Duke, of Marlborough, first attracted attention at the Court of Charles II when he was twenty, and he still attracts our attention first in the same way, by being connected in fact and in scandal with one of the King's mistresses. Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland, was his cousin, aged twenty-seven. She had recovered from her last lying in with an unusual profusion of charms, and had designed with them to recapture the King. But she fell to the handsome guardsman.

He boasted of his good fortune. The court talked about the intrigue, some saying that he had succeeded to the salaries of former lovers, others conjecturing that his indolent air and delicate shape would not prove lasting merits, and all agreeing that here began a successful career. Charles himself thought of having nothing more to do with the Duchess. He is said to have caught Churchill in the most compromising situation, and to have banished him for a time from the court. But this was no harm. The Duchess bought him a position in the household of James, Duke of York, as gentleman of the bedchamber. The £4,500 with which he bought an annuity when he was twenty-four is supposed to have come out of her pocket—that is to say, out of the King's.

In 1673, two years after he began to frequent

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the duchess, Churchill, now Captain, won the admiration of a man, and that man was the French General, Turenne. He was fighting for the French in the Netherlands with an English contingent under the Duke of Monmouth. Turenne singled him out for his good looks and his courage. Already, with Monmouth and a handful of life-guards and gentleman volunteers, he had distinguished himself before Maestricht, by running across the open under heavy fire, instead of round about the trenches, to a point in jeopardy. It was on another occasion that Turenne won a bet through Churchill's bravery. The French had given up an outpost to the Dutch : Churchill was to regain it, and Turenne wagered that he would do so with half as many men as had just lost it. Churchill won the post and Turenne a supper with wine.

Churchill needed little more than courage, good fortune and good looks, and that little more he had. He was born a year after Monmouth, at Ash House, near Axminster, in Devonshire. June 5th, 1650, was the day. Great men were alive in England, few were born near that time. His mother was a Drake, with a Cavalier father (Sir John Drake, of Ash) and a Parliamentary mother, who was a Butler from Hertfordshire, and had a sister who married James Ley, second Earl of Marlborough. The father was Winston Churchill, afterwards Sir Winston, a Dorsetshire man living at Mintern, near Dorchester : the paternal grandfather was from Wotton Glanville, in Dorset, who had married a Miss Winston, of Standiston in Gloucestershire. Winston Churchill, having been ruined by the Parliament for his services to the King as a Captain of Horse, had

Jack Churchill

to go to live in his wife's mother's house, then half in ruins. There his children were born, first Arabella in 1648 ; then Winston, who died young, in 1649 ; John in 1650 ; George, afterwards Admiral, in 1653 ; Charles, afterwards General, in 1656 ; Theobald, afterwards a clergyman, in 1663 ; and also two later sons and four later daughters, who died young.

Winston Churchill lived in obscurity at Ash till 1660, when, as he puts it, " the mists of Reformation vanishing, the blind multitude came to themselves." He was rewarded by being made a Commissioner of the Court of Claims at Dublin to consider the appeals against the Cromwellian settlement. He became a member of Parliament for Weymouth and a member of the Royal Society. In 1663 he was knighted, in 1664 he was appointed Junior Clerk Comptroller of the King's Household. Then he wrote a book, *Divi Britannici*, a remark upon the lives of all the Kings of this isle from 2855 B.C. to 1660 A.D., a very loyal and ponderous book, which he dedicated to Charles II in 1675. Yet he was no humble admirer of anything a king might choose to do after 1660. When the Test Act was being discussed in 1673, and the King was opposing it, Winston Churchill, in the Commons, said : " No song, no supper " ; Charles must pay for his supplies with the Test Act, or go without. " No song, no supper " became the cry. Winston Churchill, it seems had a turn for such phrases, and was better at speaking than writing, as sometimes happens with grand writers. Nevertheless, he remained a Clerk Comptroller under James II and supported the King's request for a large grant from the Commons for the army ; " soldiers move not without pay," said he ; " no

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penny, no paternoster ” ; he was even promoted, though he made no money that he did not spend, and had to borrow of his son Charles and to ask John to break the entail of the Ash estate to provide for him. He left nothing to his sons when he died in 1688.

While Winston Churchill was living at Ash, begetting children, and brooding over the death of Charles I, which was to him “ the *consummatum est* of all the happiness of this kingdom, as well as of the life of this king ; for upon his death the veil of the temple rent and the church was overthrown, an universal darkness overspread the state, which lasted not for twelve hours only but twelve years.” John Churchill, his son, was also there, learning, we know not how, the rudiments of love, war and diplomacy. It was a good household for the purpose, and when necessary, escape must have been easy, and then he doubtless had a choice of boys and of dogs ; he was always a lover of dogs. The grandmother, father and mother can seldom have been sufficiently united to compete with a small boy who was to win the battle of Blenheim and betray two Sovereigns. The grandmother was a staunch, unbending Puritan. The mother had a tongue, and loved the sound of it, and pursued her husband with it. Winston Churchill was an active man cut off in the thirties from the soldiering of his youth and the public affairs of his middle age. Lord Wolseley divines that the boy drank in from his father “ a love of England and a deep respect for its history, laws and liberties, which influenced his whole subsequent career.” What we know is that while he was at Ash he had lessons from the rector of the parish, Musbury parish, the

Jack Churchill

Rev. R. Farrant. When he was with his father in Dublin in 1662 he attended the City Free School. In 1663 they were in London, and the boy was at St. Paul's School, where George Jeffreys, afterwards Judge Jeffreys, was almost a contemporary. The school, I think, boasts of them both, though it did not make the one a sanguinary judge or the other a comparatively humane general. Sixty years afterwards an old clergyman who was also at the school in 1663 affirmed that he had frequently seen Churchill reading the "De Re Militari" of Vegetius, and that from it he "first learnt the elements of war." In 1665 the Great Fire put an end for the time being to St. Paul's School, and probably cut short Churchill's book-learning. One of the few writers that we know he read was Shakespeare. He is alleged to have told Burnet that he got his English history from Shakespeare. Evelyn speaks of him as without "acquired knowledge," Chesterfield as "eminently illiterate," Burnet as "bred up in the court with no literature."

To the Court he went not long afterwards as page to the Duke of York. His sister, Arabella, had lately entered the household of the Duchess, and was now, at the age of seventeen or eighteen, in 1665 or 1666, the Duke's mistress. Arabella was a tall, pale girl who appeared to be nothing but skin and bone, but an accident out hunting revealed unexpected beauties. She was thrown from her horse, and the Duke coming up, saw and was overcome: those who crowded round her, says De Grammont, could hardly believe that limbs of such exquisite beauty could belong to Arabella Churchill. Before she was twenty-seven she bore the Duke four children, two sons

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and two daughters. James Fitzjames, the elder son, born in 1670, was created Duke of Berwick, and earned the rank of Marshal in the French army.

His sister's position helped Churchill, whether it gave him his start or not. At seventeen he was an ensign in the King's or First regiment of Foot Guards, now the Grenadier Guards. The story is that he used to attend the Duke with special pleasure in his reviews of the Foot Guards. The Duke noticed his delight, and asked him what his ambition was. "To be a soldier," he answered, and asked, on his knees, for "a pair of colours," that is to say a commission, which was granted in the same year. The Duke soon had far more regard for Churchill than he need have had for his mistress' young brother. What use Churchill made of his advantage is not known. His first fighting came not more than two years after his commission, at Tangier.

Tangier had become English property with Charles II's marriage in 1662 to Catherine of Braganza. For twenty years, says Wolseley, "it was to our officers what Egypt has lately been, a drill-ground for practical soldiering." Wolseley assumes that Churchill was longing to distinguish himself in some other field than Whitehall. It has been asserted that the King sent him there to get him out of the way of the Duchess of Cleveland. Whichever it was, few men who liked Whitehall could have liked Tangier also, least of all one who, as they used to say, was formed to create love and had like Mars a heart susceptible of those soft impressions which are the usual effects of the charms of Venus. "What crime," asked the satirists later,

Jack Churchill

What crime so great Cethegus would not dare,
For one stolen rapture with the yielding fair.

Churchill went to Tangier as a volunteer with the "1st Tangier Regiment," afterwards known as Kirke's Lambs, and finally as "The Queen's," or "Royal West Surrey." The garrison were at half strength and overworked, yet they had gone many months unpaid. The food was bad. They were mutinous. Many were superannuated, more were disabled by debauchery. Men coming to Tangier "cast off all respect due to God, and mind nothing but debauchery and lewdness." Some English subjects and officers changed their religions wantonly as often as their garments. The mistakes were radical. Most of those who went to Tangier did not intend to live there, but only to make money quick there; so that they knew nothing beyond their walls and lines, and unless they sent a flag of truce out on some "pitiful business" they scarce ever saw a Moor close at hand. It was so ten years later when Lieut.-Col. Talmash, who became Churchill's rival, was out there; it can hardly have been much better in 1669 and 1670. Sometimes the English horse were attacked while foraging by the Moors. Sometimes they rode through bodies of the enemy preparing to lay siege to the forts.

The town on the land side was protected by a three-mile curve of forts within musket shot of one another, and connected by ditches and palisades. The Moors attacked these forts in 1679 with an army of six thousand foot and horse. Two they pressed so hard that the sergeants commanding had to blow up the buildings and themselves with them. But the Moors lost very

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heavily from musket shot, pike and explosion, and, after a truce, made their next attempts with trenches and mines. Charles and Henrietta forts, in particular, were ringed with trenches, mined under, and battered by cannon. For a time Charles fort held out without hope, and showed their contempt for the enemy's work by refusing to surrender even as the train to the mine under them was about to be fired. The explosion failed to destroy the fort. They had, however, to decide to abandon it with the help of a sally from the town ; for they were badly mined and the men mutinied. They announced the decision to Henrietta fort, in Irish for safety. But Henrietta was already in the hands of the Moors, and they had deserters with them who knew Irish. The Moorish trenches were ready for the escaping party from Charles fort. Three great trenches had to be crossed, deep enough in mud to smother the wounded. Captain Trelawney, who brought up the rear, had his little son with him. Of the party of one hundred and eighty, not sixty crossed the three trenches to the town alive. Bullets, scimitars and spears fretted them away ; the overwhelming numbers of the enemy pressing on them kept them almost stationary. The child was captured. The father died. When the third ditch was crossed and the handful joined with the forlorn hope of the sallying party, a single Moor, the Alcaid Garbuz, charged them all. But his horse stumbled in riding over the Captain, Captain Hume, and threw him to the ground, where he was killed by clubbed muskets. A truce followed. The English were free to go out and carry back their headless dead ; the Alcaid sent in their heads separately. English and Moors

Jack Churchill

mingled freely, and two boys of the garrison and a seaman stayed with the enemy and turned Moor, as one of the defenders of Henrietta fort had done and was now their master gunner.

Such was Tangier, a very desperate remedy for the "silks and fine array," the "smiles and languished air" of Charles the Second's court, but a good place for a youth of twenty to accustom himself to "the curious sensation of being shot at." Churchill had a little of it, and returned to Court about the end of 1670. Milton was thinking of publishing *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*.

II : THE HANDSOME ENGLISHMAN

IF Ensign John Churchill liked the Court he must have enjoyed getting back to it from Tangier. He pretty certainly did like the Court. The Court liked him. Thirty years later he was a very handsome person according to Evelyn; no man disputed the gracefulness of his person, said Swift. At first he may have been too indolent and slender, but a wart on his upper lip was not all that saved him from effeminacy. Wolsley says that he was fair-haired and blue-eyed, and later portraits show him brown-eyed and bewigged, with a fine straight nose, a skin clear up to the eyes and delicate lips full rather than not. His figure, says Chesterfield, was beautiful, his manner irresistible either by man or woman. The Duchess of Cleveland took him to her hospitable heart.

The Court was an immoral Utopia or Thelema or Avalon, all gallantry, fun, and magnificence. Charles II interfered with nobody and wanted nobody to interfere with him. Had jealousy, quarrelsomeness and disease been shut out there could have been nothing left for beauties, gallants and wits to desire. It all sounds as improbable now as any other Paradise, with its Miss Brookses "formed by nature to excite love in others, as well as to be susceptible of it themselves," its Jermyn "a moving trophy and monument of the favours and freedoms of the fair sex." If

The Handsome Englishman

Whitehall was surpassed it was by Tunbridge Wells. "Never," says De Grammont, one spring, "did love see his empire in a more flourishing condition than at Tunbridge Wells. Those who were smitten before they came to it felt a mighty augmentation of their flame; and those who seemed the least susceptible of love, laid aside their natural ferocity to act in a new character." Churchill was drawn in by his relation to the Duke of York and to the Duchess of Cleveland; but without any other strong temptations he could hardly have refused those of the Court, for "the graces protected and promoted him," he had "a genteel air and obliging deportment," and his manner was to caress and oblige all and to be ready always to do good offices. Of his diversions from pleasure we know little. But he had some duties, both in the Duke's household and as Lieutenant in the First Foot Guards. In 1671, for some unknown cause, he fought an unsuccessful duel with Captain Henry Herbert. In 1672 he went on the first of several continental campaigns, which left him the winter only for the Duchess of Cleveland.

It would be worth inquiry, said the author of the *Life and Glorious History of Marlborough*, how England bred so great a soldier in that "inactive, lazy reign" of Charles the Second, when there was always more business for the Cabinet than the camp, and greater application to luxury and riot than to either. The writer was perhaps not a soldier. Or he had never speculated how soldiers could be "true to the kindred points" of Tangier and Whitehall, the Punjaub and Piccadilly. Then, as now, the soldier on active service and the soldier at home appeared to be two men, not one. Another

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early writer (*A Short Narrative of the Life and Action of the Duke of Marlborough*, 1711) speaks of how the officers came home from Flanders with "a good air and genteel mien," and bringing the newest fashions with them, and people who never saw their hardships fancied them designed only for pleasure and ease. Such people hear of fights, sieges and many deaths. But they see nothing; the talk leaves a slight and transient impression. They ought, says he, to see the dead horses in the intolerable marches of a rainy season; they should smell "the stinks of mortality." Churchill's virtues were no more inconsistent than his vices with the Court, where he was partly educated. He learnt to know men there and in the camp. He became a soldier and a man of the world.

In 1671-2, Charles II wanted to make war on the Dutch to please Louis XIV, his ally and paymaster. Two excuses were trumped up. Some English subjects had been detained by the Dutch in Surinam; the Dutch fleet had not lowered its flags to an English ship that sailed through with orders to fire on any ships failing to salute. Louis had no better excuses. The English Ambassador at the Hague, chosen as a rough hand, to make the most of the English complaints, had to slip off without an answer for fear of the violence which his message deserved. When the English and French fleets combined off the Isle of Wight, under the Duke of York, Churchill was in the Admiral's ship serving as a marine. The Dutch attacked them in Sole Bay, off Southwold, and a very hard battle was fought without a decisive result. Sandwich, who really commanded the fleet, went down with his burning ship. De Ruyter,



Louis XIV
After Largillière

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the Dutch Admiral, had never before fought so hard an action, though he had fought thirty-two. Churchill received a captaincy. This was in the summer. Late in the autumn he took his company out to join the triumphant French army, but the troops went into winter quarters, and Churchill among other officers returned home. Where that was, if it was not at the Court or thereabouts, I do not know. Ash House, his old home, was now in the hands of a cousin Drake, their grandmother being dead.

It was in the next year's campaign that Churchill won the praise of Louis XIV, of Monmouth, and of the army and Court, for his gallantry before Maestricht : then, too, that Turenne wagered on his courage and won. Fear formed no part of his discretion. He was one of the party that stormed the counter-scarp at Maestricht ; he planted the French flag at the top of the breach ; he and but a few others ran " within twenty yards " of heavy fire to recapture the point which had just been lost again to the Dutch ; the soldiers who were leaving it turned, fell in with this new attack, and the point was won. Churchill had also saved Monmouth's life, and Monmouth told King Charles. Early in 1674 he was promoted Lieutenant Colonel. He was then twenty-three. The Duke of York had already made him Master of the Robes. In that same year he had bought his annuity of £500 with the Duchess of Cleveland's gift. Before this, Charles had been compelled by his Parliament to make peace with the Dutch. Churchill had gained credit ; doubtless contractors had made money, and Charles had fulfilled his obligations to Louis : otherwise the war was as futile as it looked. But one of its accidents was the passing of the Test Act.

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Till Charles had given his consent to the Act the Commons would not grant the million and a quarter for carrying on the war; and the immediate effect of the Test Act was that the Duke of York, being a Roman Catholic, had to resign from the Admiralty and all public offices. In 1674, Arabella Churchill presented the Duke with her last child, and her influence and her wealth must by this time have become slight, and of no use to her brother. Small wonder then that he took the royal mistress's bounty. A man without private means who devotes himself to pleasure cannot afford many scruples. Had he spent the money, had he been generous with it, he might have earned another page in De Grammont's Memoirs, but except as the Duchess of Cleveland's lover we should not have heard of him. A man of pleasure has every reason to be ashamed of poverty: he will never know that he has become parsimonious till he ceases to think it a vice. As a young man, we do not know how, he made a sum of forty broad pieces of silver, and he never touched the sum. Years later, as he was looking over some papers with Lord Cadogan, his quarter-master-general, he opened a little drawer, took out a green purse and turned some broad pieces out of it. For some time he looked at them with very visible satisfaction. Then he said to Cadogan: "Observe these pieces well! they deserve to be observed; there are just forty of them; 'tis the very first sum I ever got in my life, and I have kept it always unbroken from that time to this day." He must have loved that cash or the security it gave him. He knew the value of money: when he was speaking of a present from the Duchess of York to his wife he remarked that it was very

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fine for the price. Wolseley frankly says that experience had taught Churchill "the miseries of poverty," and he purchased the annuity to put himself above "the daily sting of want"; that his action showed strength of character and a rare power of looking ahead. We must assume that he had ambition. That he had long to wait was some excuse for his Court life. When Charles asked Louis to give him the colonelcy of the English regiment remaining in the French service, it was argued that Churchill was too much a courtier. Soldiering or pleasure he must have, and pleasure was always to be had. He got his colonelcy, succeeding Lord Peterborough. There was fighting at once. Louis was still at war with Holland and the Empire. In the Netherlands Condé was opposed to William of Orange. Turenne was manœuvring against the Duke de Bournonville and an Imperial army upon the Rhine, and Churchill was with Turenne and fought at Sintzheim in June, and at Entzheim in October. At Entzheim Turenne, with 22,000, attacked a force half as large again which had taken up its position beyond a river, but too far off to command it, very much as the French did at Blenheim. Turenne crossed by night and put the English and some of the French foot into a wood in front of the enemy's left. There the battle chiefly raged in the drizzling rain. Twice the English and French were driven out of the wood and twice recaptured it, and they held it when night fell and Turenne had won—or, at least, de Bournonville had imagined himself beaten. Churchill's regiment lost ten out of its twenty-two officers, five killed, five wounded, and was commended for its courage in the action. Next year, 1675, Turenne died in battle, with

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Churchill still serving under him. Nothing has come to light concerning Churchill's part in the campaigns of 1676 and 1677, except that in 1677, at Metz, he was somehow the instrument in saving a French lady's lands from those who came to ravage them. At the end of 1677 he became a Colonel in the English army, not merely in an English regiment in France.

There were more penmen at the Court than at the camp. We know that he spent his winter in England, with a short break in Paris on his way home from the campaign, and we know something of his pleasures. Whether or not because he had begun to meet Sarah Jennings, he gave up his position with the Duchess of Cleveland. One story is that he was tired of her, and got another lover to take his place ; then, surprising them together, he made the woman's infidelity an excuse for being quit of her. Lediard, who tells the story, heard the worst of Churchill. He it is who declares that the money the Duchess gave to Churchill had been given to her in advance by another gallant for favours which he was not in a condition to accept when the hour came, because he had thought " to heighten the pleasures of Venus by those of Bacchus." He also quotes the lines :

The gallant, too, to whom she paid it down
Lived to refuse that mistress half a crown.

If he was the father of her daughter Barbara, it was his worst offence against the standards of his time to refuse to lend her money to pay a card debt. But the story is not proved. No doubt his meanness made him a peg for all the stories of meanness current. Another one told of him in his last years at Bath has also a card room for its

The Handsome Englishman

scene. He was playing at piquet with Dean Jones, says Spence, for sixpence a game. When he had won a game he left off. He did not forget the sixpence. He kept asking for it, though the Dean had no silver. At last he desired the Dean to change a guinea, alleging as an excuse that he should want sixpence to pay for a chair home. So the sixpence was secured, and in the end the Duke walked home to save it. It is not proved ; but neither is anything known that makes it unlikely.

III : SARAH JENNINGS

AT some time in 1675 or 1676, then, Churchill fell violently in love with Sarah Jennings, a maid of honour to the Duke of York's second wife, Mary of Modena, and ten years younger than himself. In the words of Coxe, "whatever may have been the conduct of Colonel Churchill during the fervour of youth, and amidst the temptations of a dissolute Court, his irregularities soon yielded to the influence of a purer passion, which recalled him from licentious connexions, and gave a colour to his future life": *fol-de-rol*. Sarah Jennings and her elder sister, Frances, were conspicuous in the Court for their chastity. Frances was equally conspicuous for her beauty. She had flaxen hair, a fair lustrous complexion, a mouth not the smallest but the handsomest in the world. Her expression was animated, her movements easy and unexpected. It mattered nothing that somebody else had a better nose or better hands and arms: she had charms, but she had also charm. She was witty and quick; her tongue could pierce; and as her imagination was subject to flights and she would often begin to speak before she had done thinking; her talk was sometimes as fantastical as it was fascinating, while she was too beautiful to have it called unintelligible. The Duke of York thought to make a mistress of her. He ogled her, he made her speeches in a corner, he sent her billets which

Sarah Jennings

she dropped out of her muff for any one to read. The courtiers, says De Grammont, could not understand how this girl "who had never tasted anything more delicious than the plums and apricots of Saint Albans" should become at once the ornament and the example of the Court. The King himself took aim at her. He liked her wit, and she might very well have liked his. According to De Grammont, Miss Stewart drove the King off from what ought to be considered strictly his brother's flock. Miss Jennings came off with the additional glory of a royal approach. She "had the greatest curiosity" to see Jermyn, that "moving monument of the favours and freedoms of the fair sex," and he courted her, and she liked him, so that she sighed and even shed tears for his absence when her other lover, big Dick Talbot, was standing by, imagining himself successful. She showed all her temperament on this journey down to Tunbridge Wells. At first she was irritable and displeased with everything that pleased others. For Jermyn was away, exhausted by riding on the high road twenty miles in an hour for a wager. Then she seemed to be lost in thought, but turned suddenly to sallies of wit, which made Talbot think Jermyn had been forgotten. Yet a little after she was laughing and presently sighing "poor little David" at someone's putting into her hand Rochester's witticism: "that Talbot had struck terror among the people of God by his gigantic stature; but that Jermyn, like a little David, had vanquished the great Goliath." Talbot had to wait fifteen years for her. For, in 1665, she married Count George Hamilton, brother of Anthony, the author of *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, and he did not die till 1676,

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and even then she enjoyed her widowhood three years. Talbot's essential merit with her, says De Grammont, was his forty thousand a year from land. But she may have married Hamilton for love. She was seventeen at the time.

Sarah Jennings must have been very much like Frances. She had the same fair hair and complexion, the same glancing moods, the same wit and turns of haughtiness. She had not equal fame at Court, though she, too, was ogled by the Duke of York and had "received advantageous offers of marriage from different persons of consideration." Like her sister, she resisted all temptations till she was married, like her, at seventeen.

In December, 1674, Sarah Jennings took the part of Mercury in a performance of Crowne's comedy, "Calisto, or the Chaste Nymph," at the Court. All the performers were ladies, all were "covered with jewels," says Evelyn. Among the actresses was the Duke of York's daughter Anne, afterwards Queen; and Sarah Jennings was already her friend. Anne was nine, Sarah fourteen. When she was fifteen, Sarah had begun to receive love letters from Churchill and wrote others back. Like other girls of the age, she sometimes welcomed her lover in her bedroom, and it was known either from her tattle or by way of the keyhole that she allowed him to fasten or unfasten her garters, in the strict, not necessarily in the metaphorical, sense. But this might have been done in a public place and in the public eye. De Grammont describes some such familiarity in the card room; but the active party was the Duke of York; it may have been a royal privilege. Moreover, the costume of the day was such that it is hard to see what Arabella Churchill can have gained by that

Sarah Jennings

fall from her horse. Sarah Jennings, at least, drew distinctions. One of his letters praised her fine shape. "Impertinent reflexions," she called them, saying that they would provoke her very much had he not already been miserable and so given her her revenge. When they could not be dancing or keeping close company in her room, the young lovers wrote many letters. One of his presents to her was a puppy. He sent her two, of which she was to choose the best and feed it on warm milk. By this letter it is plain that he had expected to be with her the night before and hopes to be the coming night ; he prays that she will let him be with her, and that, if she has nothing to do, she make it as late as possible. He is, he says, never truly happy except with her. It was an expression which he was to repeat many times, with variations, over a period of forty years. Never had he loved anybody "to that heat." He is even willing not to meet her—so he says—if she think he ought not to, or if it "disquiets" her. If she is to be with the Duchess of York he will be there also ; but he prefers her chamber. Sometimes he persuades her to make an excuse for not attending the Duchess, so that they may meet alone. Her letters do not always refer directly to her feelings. One tells him that he need not fear that her sister's coming will make a change in her, or that anything will make a change except his conduct. Another says she is willing to see him, but thinks he ought rather to go to the play, as he has a headache ; however, let him tell her without compliment what he really thinks is best for him.

When the Churchills were trying to arrange a marriage between John Churchill and Catherine

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Sedley, and Sarah Jennings heard of it, her pride was wonderful. She would not see him or be seen by him at all, if it were possible : she expected to suffer for his falseness, but she would bear it and thank God because He showed her her mistake though it was late. She would have rather cried than danced at a ball about this time, the end of 1676, because Churchill was talking of going to France for a change of air, pretending to be in consumption, when his real trouble was that he wished to break off from Sarah Jennings, so it was thought. She also had threatened that she was going to Paris with her sister, now Lady Hamilton, and a widow. Whether or not Sarah was irresistible, Catherine Sedley and her money were not, and Churchill was soon begging to be allowed to adore her all his life ; he would never anger her again, but would show her the same devotion “ as to his God.” She was relenting, yet insisting that he was not to dispute with her and prevent her answering him. He thought that if she could ever love him the happiness would make him immortal. He reminded her that he was putting his father out by what he did. He made proposals through the Duchess of York, which were apparently to show Sarah what money he was worth, or perhaps to procure some increase or advance. Sarah at first resented her interference. She was touchy : she fancied one day that he laughed at her, as he stood by the Duke, though he says himself that he could have cried. But they had arranged a meeting and had missed one another, and she was irritated by it. At last they were married, just when William of Orange was marrying the Duke of York’s eldest daughter, Mary ; and the Duchess of York gave them some

Sarah Jennings

pecuniary help and was the only person concerned who knew of the marriage for some time. For the Jenningses, moderate country gentry, of Holywell House, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, had opposed it as much as the Churchills. Sarah's grandfather had been High Sheriff of Hertfordshire and M.P. for St. Albans. Her mother was a violent woman, who had lived with her for some time at Court in spite of words and blows between them, till at length she was turned out and had to leave her daughter behind. Sarah called her a mad woman. But they understood one another, and quarrels begot reconciliations ; and in the end the mother left Sarah all her property.

IV : COLONEL CHURCHILL

CHURCHILL, for some years after his marriage, had no settled home. His wife stayed chiefly at his father's house at Minterne, in Dorset, while he himself went to and from the Court, travelled on royal errands or fought abroad. Early in 1678 he had been made Colonel of a foot regiment, which was named after him, Churchill's. Louis XIV had an army in Flanders, but it was uncertain at first what part the English troops were to play. To Parliament Charles proposed to equip a fleet and an army to support his Allies, the Dutch, and a million was voted. Still Churchill did not believe that Charles intended war, though English troops were at Ostend. In April he was sent to make an agreement with William of Orange as to the forces to be contributed by England, while Sir William Temple negotiated a renewal of the triple alliance against France. Charles himself had already secretly signed a treaty with France, by which he was bound to disband his army if the Dutch did not accept the French terms at Nimeguen : his price for the treaty was about a quarter of a million. Churchill had, however, the advantage of several meetings with William of Orange. William, says Wolseley, must now have seen Churchill's ability as diplomatist and man of business, and may have anticipated that here was a man " who would be something more than a



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After Kneller

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Colonel Churchill

power in the great game which William already hoped to play in England." The two men were of exactly the same age; both had been well trained in dissimulation, both had the advantage of coolness, which grace made an ornament in Churchill. William stood to lose everything. Churchill had only the beginnings of a reputation to lose. He was working for masters whom he could neither like nor respect, and at first, no doubt, such negotiations were partly serious fun for a man of the world, as well as a tricky game for a man of ambition. William gained few victories yet could not be beaten. Churchill was destined never to lose a battle: the graces obviously "protected and promoted him." We know little of what they thought of one another. When William was King, Churchill was said to have scoffed and laughed at him, while William made no secret of the fact that if he was obliged by Churchill's treason he did not love the traitor. But now, at the age of twenty-eight, they silently registered differences, and each in his own way flattered for the future's sake. Some difficulties there were, but Churchill told his wife no more than that they had kept him abroad longer than he expected and wished. With all his heart and soul, he wrote from Brussels, he longed to be with her, for she was "dearer than his own life." To be "perpetually conversing" with her by letter was his wish in absence; she should have a letter by every post if he could have his way. She, on the other hand, kept him three weeks without a letter, even when he was in England.

England was raising an army to fight either the French or the Dutch. Those who thought it was the Dutch deserted. The Dutch accepted the

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French terms, but the French would not carry them out, and only strong English feeling and the stoppage of his pension from Louis forced Charles to act as if he meant war. Churchill was hopeful, and again he went out to arrange matters with William of Orange. On his return, either his wife attracted him more than war, or he had to deceive her, but he told her he hoped peace would be made. Even when at last he was ordered to Flanders to command a brigade, he persisted that there would be peace, and assured his wife that she should see him as soon as he was back in England. That was in September, 1678; the Peace of Nimeguen was signed in the same month.

Less than twelve months after his letter from Brussels, that is in March, 1679, Churchill was again in that city. The Duke of York had been banished, and Churchill, with his wife, the Duchess and Lord Peterborough, accompanied him. The discovery of the Popish plot and the murder of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey had frenzied the Protestants, and the Duke of York, being a Papist, had to go. He was away five months, Churchill going to and fro between him and Charles or Louis. When he was summoned back to see Charles in a dangerous illness, Churchill returned with him. It was Churchill who went on a mission from him to Louis with a letter asking that entire credit should be given to the young man, the Master of the Duke's Wardrobe. Churchill liked Courts and the people round them and between them. They gave him his pleasures and play for his talents. Back again from Paris, he returned shortly to Brussels with his master and went with him to Scotland, where he was to reside, as being out of the way, but not too much out of the way.

Colonel Churchill

Mrs. Churchill remained behind in Jermyn Street, St. James's, for her first confinement. From Edinburgh he wrote many letters to her, telling her the news, expressing his longing to be back with her, swearing that the first night on which he was blessed in having her in his arms had not been more earnestly wished for by him than he now wished for the day of seeing her again, swearing that if they were not married he would beg her on his knees to be his wife. The new-born child, Henrietta, he hoped would be like her in everything as in its fair hair, but it died in infancy. Their next child was born eighteen months later, and received the same name.

Husband and wife were soon joined again. Charles recalled his brother, and the whole party reached London in February, 1680. Seven months they spent with the Court in London or at Newmarket. Churchill apparently sought other employments, for he was supposed to be going to Paris or the Hague as Ambassador or to Sheerness as Governor. But the Duke of York could not do without him, at least so long as he was liable to be asked to go on his travels again, as he was in October. The Duke and his party, including Churchill and his wife, returned to Edinburgh; and there for the most part they had to stay for two years. Parliament was doing what it could to exclude the Duke from the throne. It would have him treated as a traitor if he attempted to mount the throne or even if he appeared thenceforward in England. But the Parliament that passed the Exclusion Bill was at once dissolved. Churchill now came to London once more on business for the Duke with the King. He was to deal direct with Charles, not with the ministers, and to propose

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that he should not assemble Parliament, and not form alliances with Spain and Holland which would involve war with France, which would cost money, which could only be obtained from Parliament; but on the contrary, to form an alliance with France. Also, James wished either to have leave to return to London, or even Audley End, or, if not, to command the forces in Scotland. Churchill could do nothing. Probably he wished to succeed, at least because it would have proved his merit in the game. If he did not approve of the Duke's intentions—that England should be ruled at home by a king in French pay and should fight French battles abroad—he did not disapprove. It seems most likely that he was an indifferent diplomatist working for hire and for the incidental pleasures and advantages of the game. Did he also know that by “toleration” the Duke meant toleration for Catholics only? Or was he deceived as William Penn was? It may have been impossible for him to believe that a King could be such a fool as James II. What he said himself was that though he had an aversion to Popery, he was no less averse to persecution for conscience sake. In Scotland he had protected some who had been persecuted by severe Episcopalians. He deemed it the highest act of injustice, he said, to set any one aside from his inheritance, upon bare suppositions of intentional evils when nothing that is actual appears to preclude him from the exercise of his just rights. Some, including Lord Shaftesbury, proposed that Lucy Walters's son, Monmouth, should be adopted as heir to the crown instead of York. Monmouth and Churchill were just of an age and well known to one another; and

Colonel Churchill

Churchill could not have felt that Monmouth would succeed even against York. Four years later it was that Churchill was reported to have said : " If the King should attempt to change our religion and constitution I will instantly quit his service," James being then newly made King.

It would not be easy to define or describe Churchill's religion. It was apparently something which could be changed by a king, and something which he would not allow even a king to change for him. He had no aversion to Catholics ; he had served one regularly from his youth up, and he had mixed with them abroad as well as at home. " Our religion " (and constitution) was part of the national idiosyncrasy which had not been made and was not going to be unmade by machines or kings.

Charles II was not dead yet, and if Churchill had not already any alarms for our religion and constitution, it is safe to say that his mind was at rest. He supposed that the Duke of York would succeed Charles, and had not yet begun to weigh the chances of the Prince of Orange, who was in London this year looking about him. It is known, however, that the Prince had a good opinion of Churchill, and had hoped to see him at the Hague as English Minister.

The answers brought back by Churchill satisfied the Duke of York, at any rate with the negotiator's skill, and he was sent again and yet again to London during 1681. Early in 1682 the Duke himself was able to come to London, and that permanently, because there was no longer any Parliament, and he was able to oblige the King in the matter of a settlement for Charles's mistress, the little Duke of Richmond's mother, Louise de

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Querouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth. Churchill went back to Edinburgh with the Duke by sea to fetch the Duchess of York, who was expecting a confinement, and it was desirable it should take place in the capital. Their ship, the *Gloucester*, was wrecked on a sandbank off the Humber mouth. One small boat only was there belonging to the ship, so that two hundred must swim or drown. James stepped out of his cabin window into the boat, with some earls, some priests, and Churchill. Churchill distinguished himself by defending the boat against those of the crowd who tried to leap into it. His sword saved the boat and the Duke. Most of the two hundred were drowned.

V : LORD CHURCHILL

THE Duke of York was now settled at Court. Churchill became Baron Churchill of Aymouth, only just missed a D.C.L. at Oxford by not attending, and was talked of for Secretary of State. When the Princess Anne was married in August, 1683, to Prince George of Denmark, Lady Churchill became one of her ladies of the bed chamber. She and the Princess had been friends from childhood. They had been together lately at Brussels and at Edinburgh. Now Anne began to show a very strong affection for Lady Churchill, a submissive and admiring affection which compelled her to ask her friend not to call her "Your Highness," but to be as free with her as "one friend ought to be with another": Lady Churchill was to tell her her mind freely in all things. Anne confessed herself all impatience for their next day of meeting. Anne was eighteen, Sarah twenty-three, with two daughters living. The dull, dressy, extravagant Princess looked up to the woman whom she was paying £200 a year. She could not, said Sarah long afterwards, bear to hear from her the usual terms of form and rank; and one day she proposed that they should address one another by feigned names without distinction of rank. Anne, it seems, hit upon two names, Morley and Freeman, and left Sarah to choose which of them she would have for herself. Sarah's "frank, open temper"

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—she says herself—ought to choose Freeman and leave Morley to Anne ; and from this time Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Freeman “ began to converse as equals, made so by affection and friendship.” Anne, said Sarah long after, loved fawning and adoration, but it is certain that if there was any now Anne gave it, not received it ; and it is probable that Sarah from the start took the upper hand and put no restraint on her tastes or speech. Nothing proves that Sarah, who had great intelligence, was above enjoying the devotion of a fool, Princess or not. At first, ambition can have done little to strengthen the connection, and as to making money by it, Sarah declared that she only sold two places—those of “ pages of the backstairs ”—and that was when Anne particularly kept them open for her to dispose of, rather than Lady Clarendon, whom she was about to succeed then (in 1685) as first lady of the bed-chamber. Whatever she gained from her position, she never sacrificed her principles and prejudices. She never even controlled her temper to gain or to save anything. That perhaps she could not do, or she would not have fought with her mother, spilt water over Queen Anne’s dress to spite her, and cut off her hair to spite her husband. She cut off her hair in a rage and left it where Churchill would be certain to see it. The next time she saw it was after his death in a cabinet where he had laid it up ; nor could she tell the story, which she did often, without crying.

When Lady Churchill was new in her place with Anne and accompanied her to Tunbridge Wells, she left her children behind her, partly, it seems, under Churchill’s care. For he reports how pleased he is with them and they with him—



Queen Anne

Lord Churchill

having only their maid besides—so that Henrietta is pulling his arm that he may help her to write to her mother. Lady Sunderland's housekeeper had brought the girls a bottle of something to drink, which he thought too hot for them and was taking over for his own use, unless she thought differently. There was now little for Churchill to do. Parliament did not meet. No wars were fought. The King and the Duke of York lived snug on Louis' money, with only a plot or two to break the monotony. Monmouth went in disgrace to William of Orange, Russell and Algernon Sidney were executed. But Churchill did nothing unless it was the Duke of York's secret business.

James quietly succeeded his brother in February, 1685. Churchill attended his Coronation, was raised to the English peerage as Baron Churchill of Sandridge in Hertfordshire, but not until after he had gone to Paris for the King as Envoy Extraordinary to notify his accession and offer thanks for a gratuity of £20,000. He carried the message and the answer by word of mouth, so much was he trusted. Yet he announced his independence at this time by saying that if the King were to attempt to change "our religion and constitution" he would instantly quit his service. The House of Commons, too, doubted the King's intention to maintain "our religion," but not sufficiently to refuse to settle on him a sum of money for life.

Churchill had a month or two of quiet in his new house, Holywell House, at St. Alban's, where he was High Steward and his next brother, George, afterwards the Admiral, was Member of Parliament. His younger brother, Charles, who had been in the service of Prince George of Denmark,

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and accompanied him to England, was now a Lieutenant-Colonel. Then, in June, the Duke of Monmouth, the "Protestant Duke," landed at Lyme Regis and proclaimed King James a usurper, a murderer, a traitor, and a tyrant. Protestant or not, he was not the King for Churchill. The forces to oppose Monmouth marched under Churchill as their Major-General. In four days he was at Chard, in Somerset, where, says Wolseley, "his local knowledge was of great use to him." But Lord Feversham superseded him a few days later, apparently because James wanted to oblige Feversham, and did not know, or did not care, that Churchill was the better soldier. Churchill, resigned but resentful, finished the campaign under Feversham. At first he commanded a body of royal troops which hung about Monmouth wherever he went, hustled him and cut his fringes; but in the first week of July he combined with Feversham at Bath. Wolseley thinks that the King wished Churchill always to be at hand to advise Feversham, who professed to be grateful and promised to write to the King and commend him. Churchill saw significant things as a boy sees nests. The enemy, he found, desired horses and saddles more than anything else. He concluded that they wanted to break away with the horse, and he was right. But he feared to give his opinion freely; he may have objected to giving all that he knew to a man so thrust in over him, when the trouble would be his and the honour another's. He would not, however, neglect the men and all other things that were his especial care. They were just then about to face the enemy on Sedgemoor, where Feversham, says Wolseley, "allowed himself to

Lord Churchill

be surprised by an undisciplined mob." The surprise would have been complete had the enemy known that a great wet ditch lay just on their side of Feversham, or had they been able to find crossing places in the dark. Feversham, who was a good eater and sleeper, was in bed. Many of his men lay helpless or asleep with cider : one alert regiment advertised itself by the slow matches burning in readiness for the matchlocks. These men settled the fate of the rebels, with Churchill's help. They unexpectedly fired into the horse trying to cross the ditch, and drove it off in panic ; and the panic spread confusion. Churchill took command of the regiment, put the camp in a posture of defence, and at length led the dragoons over the ditch to begin the offensive, which drove Monmouth into hiding and cut to pieces his cloth-workers, Mendip miners, and Anabaptists. From Churchill came the news of victory, and Evelyn blessed God that there was now a fair prospect of tranquility if people reformed and were thankful and made a right use of this mercy of Sedgmoor. " The sun," says Wolseley, " had never shone throughout a day of more wicked, more cruel butchery." Churchill occupied Bridgewater, and in a week was on his way home again, preceded by a letter asking his wife to be in town on his arrival, because he would have no ease till he was in her arms. He had no part in the campaign of Jeffreys. We only know that he warned a lady who had come to plead with the King before Jeffreys tried her brothers that the King's heart had no more compassion than the marble chimney-piece in the room ; and that he with the other Peers at the trial pronounced Lord Delamere not guilty of treason for his part in the

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rebellion. Churchill's reputation as a soldier was advanced. His reward was a Colonelcy in the Life Guards.

The success of his regular troops against the West Country rebels, and the failure of the militia, pleased King James. For he believed that he could rely on regular troops to do what he wished on account of their more personal loyalty. The loyalty of the militia, being rather national than personal, he could not rely on so completely. He was thus confirmed in his intention to have a strong standing army. In the first year of his reign he raised six new regiments of horse, two of dragoons or mounted infantry, and nine of infantry. As far as possible he inserted Papist officers, and Mass was celebrated in the midst of the great permanent camp at Hounslow. But though he "made too much" of his soldiers so that they became uncivil and unruly, and though "duty and *esprit de corps*" alone will "evoke the most splendid deeds of valour,"* he discovered that "you cannot drill even a savage into a mere machine for the destruction of your enemies." A test was deliberately applied, in order to learn whether the army was going to side with him in repealing the penal acts against Catholics. He told any men of one regiment who were not in favour of dispensing with the Test Act to lay down their arms, whereupon all laid down their arms except two officers and a few Catholic privates.

This was not Churchill's regiment. He was now Colonel of the new Royal Dragoons, and this position was practically his only employment between the beginning and the end of James's reign. If he saw the possibility of civil war he must

* Clifford Walton's "British Standing Army."

Lord Churchill

have been inclined to prefer the Protestant side. He would naturally choose the winning side if he could, and he must have weighed the chances. His wife and Anne were decidedly Protestant and anti-Catholic. When James introduced four Catholic Lords into the Privy Council, Anne, his daughter, wrote to Lady Churchill to say how much she was surprised, how sorry, because it would give countenance to "those sort of people," and made a very dismal prospect. At the court-martial of the "five Portsmouth captains" who had refused to have Irish Catholics foisted on them, Churchill voted that they should be shot. They were not, but James in after years came to the conclusion that Churchill had voted for such a sentence simply because it would be unpopular and damage the King. Perhaps Churchill's eyes had been opened by the appointment of Feversham over his head before Sedgemoor, so that he saw how few his chances were under James. Perhaps he had foreseen what would happen to James. At any rate, he was heard to swear that he would not do what the King required of him in the matter of the Test Act. When he saw Protestant Colonels, members of Parliament, magistrates, being removed for Protestantism, he could not be indifferent. Being no longer in a confidential high position, it was at least as easy to take the popular as the royal side, so long as he could maintain his inactivity. He appeared to be with the majority, but as he did not come into conflict with the King or his Catholic friends, James might still think he was to be counted on. His brother-in-law, Tyrconnel, formerly "lying Dick Talbot," was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. And Churchill never had been on the losing side.

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Through his wife's position with Anne, too, Churchill breathed inevitably a Protestant atmosphere. Lady Churchill, it seems, did not strike people as religious; but Anne defended her—to Princess Mary in Holland—as one who had a true sense of English Church doctrine, and abhorred the Church of Rome; as to Lord Churchill, though he was a “very faithful servant” to the King and would obey the King in all things “consistent with religion,” yet he would rather lose everything than change that. In fact, Churchill was already pledged to Anne and against her father. He wrote thus to the Prince of Orange in May, 1687, after a conversation with the Prince's envoy, Van Dykvelt. Anne had asked him to assure William that she “was resolved, by the assistance of God, to suffer all extremities, even to death itself, rather than be brought to change her religion.” Also, Churchill himself “felt it his duty” to assure the Prince that he valued his places and the King's favour as nought “in comparison with being true to his religion”; yes, the King might command him in anything but his religion. The rest is in a very humble strain: “I know the troubling you, sir, with thus much of myself, I being of so little use to your Highness, is very impertinent, but I think it may be a great ease to your Highness and the Princess to be satisfied that the Princess of Denmark is safe in the trusting of me; I being resolved, although I cannot live the life of a saint, if there be ever occasion for it, to show the resolution of a martyr.” Churchill, like most other Protestants of position, from Sunderland, the Secretary of State, downwards, was beginning to conspire with William against James. He could have endured Charles II

Lord Churchill

to the end of time, but James was an impossible creature for an English King at that time, being a bigot and a tyrant of small ability, and as a man false and unlikable. An Englishman needed not to be a strong Protestant to object to this King, and to see in his very Catholicism the symbol of his offending. Churchill, however, was no more martyr than saint. He was a diplomatist. He continued to attend James, and was with him when he made a progress through the country, touching for the kings-evil and generally doing what he could to make up to his people. At Winchester Cathedral two Catholic priests officiated while the King touched, and walking in the Deanery garden before dinner afterwards, he asked Churchill what the people said, and Churchill reported his answer and the rest of the conversation to a man, who put it in a book in 1713.* The people, said Churchill, showed very little liking to it, and it was their general voice that his Majesty was paving the way for the introduction of Popery. The King talked about toleration, liberty of conscience, and his royal word, and was angry. Churchill said he had spoken only from zeal for his Majesty's service, which he would venture as much for as any subject in the three kingdoms ; but, he concluded, he had been bred a Protestant and intended to live and die in that communion, and as above nine-tenths of the people were of the same persuasion, he feared (which excess of duty made him say) from the genius of the English nation and their " natural aversion " to Catholicism, he feared " some consequences which I dare not so much as name, and which it creates

* " The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals : the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene."

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a horror in me to think of." And the King said he would exercise his religion, favour his Catholic subjects, and be a common father to his Protestants, but remembering that he was a King and to be obeyed. The consequences he left to Providence and the power God had put into his hands. At dinner the King talked chiefly to the Dean, and that about passive obedience, to show his resentment, which the writer of the book says he was witness of, for he stood by. But I cannot believe the story. It is too heroical. Churchill could not have been so direct; nor could James have failed to see in that threat of "consequences" practically a proof of the conspiracy and of this lord's complicity. The story reached this form in a book which gave an heroical account of the life of Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough, in his time of disgrace. It contains, embedded and concealed in it, some talk which really passed between the two men, but what it was I cannot divine, nor whether it would justify Wolseley in pronouncing that "Churchill fully realized the sacrifices which his staunch Protestantism entailed upon him, and deliberately chose the upright course."

Churchill, as has been seen, like most other important men, stuck to his religion and secretly corresponded with their King's treacherous daughter, Mary, and her husband, William of Orange. Had he really warned and threatened the King he would have deserved the same sort of reputation as the Seven Bishops who refused to issue an order in their dioceses for the reading of the King's declaration of religious indulgence, or as the royal troops at Hounslow who cheered on their acquittal, or as the seven who signed the invitation next day to William of Orange.

Lord Churchill

Churchill, once the King's favourite, and Sunderland, his Secretary of State, did not sign that document. But a few days afterwards he wrote to William, saying that Sidney (one of the signatories) would let the Prince know how he intended to behave himself; he thought "it was what he owed to God and his country," and added that he took leave to put his honour into his Highness's hands, where he thought it safe, and that he was resolved to die in that religion which it had pleased God to give William the power and will to protect. Wolseley describes it as the letter of a patriot, not a mere conspirator, "the letter of one who was risking all for conscience sake." But what did he risk? He had had no advancement under James: his hands had practically been tied. Under a Protestant sovereign who would be much indebted to him he might hope for more. Knowing the temper of the army, knowing that no powerful man was out of the conspiracy, he could not have doubted of success.

Wolseley asks if Churchill was justified in deserting James, if his treachery and the time chosen for it can be excused or forgiven, and why Churchill has been singled out for abuse among all the traitors and conspirators of the time. The last is easy to answer. Because he was a soldier. Churchill is remembered chiefly as a soldier, and we expect some degree of open courage from a soldier. It looks ill for a soldier to lie to his King up to the last moment and then slip away to the hostile army: it looks worse still when this soldier who is to slaughter Catholics for the Protestant usurper is one who slaughtered Protestants for the Catholic King a few years before. We have no right or reason to apply a

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different standard to a soldier, but I think we do ; and being cheated of an heroical scene by a soldier as sly as anyone, we have some indignation to ease upon him.

As to forgiveness, that is not our trade, nor yet condemnation. The excuse for Churchill's treachery is that it greatly helped to consummate the "glorious revolution." The longer the treachery was drawn out, the surer was the power of the conspirators and the impotence of James. But it is to be doubted whether Churchill hung on at James's side for the purpose of giving the conspiracy full time to develop. The alternative is that he waited to make sure which side was going to win. If it is a question of morality, there is nothing to choose between the two, though I suppose the blackness of the first might be admired for being so complete.

James suspected what was being done for some time. He kept the navy in readiness, and would have brought over troops from Ireland but for the advice of Churchill, among others. Since all were in the conspiracy it is no wonder that the King was deceived.

On November 5th, William, with his Dutch troops and the English mercenaries in the Dutch service, landed at Torbay. James reviewed his troops in Hyde Park before setting out for Salisbury, and Churchill is reported, not by a panegyrist or defendant, to have lolled out his tongue and laughed at the whole proceeding. Lord Feversham again was in command. Churchill was raised to the rank of Lieutenant-General. He was still behind with James at Windsor when the first of the royal officers from Salisbury pushed forward and joined the enemy, and with Sunderland and

Lord Churchill

Godolphin, he was seen rejoicing at this news. James now moved on to Salisbury, and Churchill took command of his brigade. Still Churchill left nothing undone that might preserve what remained of the King's confidence. He recommended taking the offensive ; he was among the first to swear again, at the King's suggestion, to serve to the last drop of his blood. Nor could James be persuaded by Feversham to arrest him when the evidence was overwhelming. I think Churchill must always suffer in his reputation from a reaction in James's favour at seeing him so fearfully confiding up to the last, and by the traitor escaping without a word or a blow. He has been accused of a plot for kidnapping the King. It would have been a useless thing to do, but it would hardly have given a worse look to Churchill's conduct. When, as Wolseley says, "delay might imperil their safety, and, as far as Churchill was concerned, possibly the success of the plot," he went off to William. This was the letter he left behind :

"Sir,—Since men are seldom suspected of sincerity when they act contrary to their interests, and though my dutiful behaviour to your Majesty in the worst of times (for which I acknowledge my poor services much overpaid) may not be sufficient to incline you to a charitable interpretation of my actions, yet I hope the great advantage I enjoy under your Majesty, which I can never expect in any other change of Government, may reasonable convince your Majesty and the world that I am actuated by a higher principle when I offer that violence to my inclination and interest, as to treat your Majesty at a time when your affairs seem to challenge the strictest obedience from all your subjects, much more from one who

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lies under the greatest obligations to your Majesty. This, sir, could proceed from nothing but the inviolable dictates of my conscience, and a necessary concern for my religion (which no good man can oppose), and with which I am instructed nothing can come in competition. Heaven knows with what partiality my dutiful opinion of your Majesty has hitherto represented those unhappy designs, which inconsiderate and self-interested men have framed against your Majesty's true interest and the Protestant religion ; but as I can no longer join with such to give a pretence by conquest to bring them to effect, so I will always, with the hazard of my life and fortune (so much your Majesty's due), endeavour to preserve your royal person and lawful rights, with all the tender concern and dutiful respect that becomes, Sir, your Majesty's most dutiful and most obliged subject and servant.—CHURCHILL.”

This was not the tone of the men who destroyed Charles the First, and as there was hardly one among Churchill's fellow conspirators who behaved much better, it may be put down in part to the breeding they had had under the happy Restoration of Charles II. It is hard to believe that a man of another generation would have thought his sincerity open to suspicion because he had acted contrary to his interests. James said a better thing on this point when in exile, and of Marlborough too: he said that the most interested man's repentance may be credited when he can hope to mend his fortune by repairing his fault and returning to his duty. But perhaps in no age would a comparatively honest man in this position have troubled his victim by alleging that he expected to be the worse for the change. He was

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not the worse for the change, and only in a state of aberration could he have expected to be, unless indeed his conscience should perhaps later on entertain doubts as to its inviolable dictates. Or is there after all a thing called religion which so alters what it touches that we must call this letter, as Wolseley does, "straightforward, but touching?"

In this place I will not pause to do more than remark that Churchill's later correspondence with James and against William, even though it was mostly ineffectual, seems to rule out of the argument anything that can be known as conscience.

Anne and Prince George and Lady Churchill had behaved in the same way. The Prince remained with James later than Churchill, and Anne had written some days before to William saying that he was to leave the King "as soon as his friends thought proper." Anne and Lady Churchill went off in time to avoid meeting James when he should return from Salisbury, for he got no further west. Before Christmas James left the country, and Churchill went ahead to London to re-assemble his own troop of Life Guards and command the regiments, that is the Protestant part of them, disbanded by Feversham. Churchill was the greatest man in the army next to Marshall Schomberg. He was one of the Peers who formed an association to promote the objects of the revolution, and asked that a Convention Parliament should be called. The Parliament was divided as to whether it should call William Regent or King, but as William would not consent to be Regent or his wife's gentleman usher, the throne was declared vacant and William put into it. In these discussions Churchill took no part except

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to vote at first for a regency. When he saw that James was to be turned out altogether he pleaded indisposition and kept away from the House of Lords, out of "delicacy." A delicate situation it was, because if William was to be King for Life, Anne's chance of succession was slightly decreased, and Anne objected and Lady Churchill took her part, until it was discreet to change her mind and the Princess's also. Thus, though William overcame Anne through the Churchills' influence, he appears to have conceived a dislike of them. Mary already disliked Lady Churchill, her religion or irreligion, and her influence over Anne. But Churchill was rewarded by a place as Gentleman of the Bedchamber and the title of Earl of Marlborough. By selling commissions in the army as his right was, he became richer than before ; but he had now a family of three girls and a boy and was expecting another girl, and he had the mansion to keep up which he had built at the end of Charles's reign. He held, therefore, at once at least as good a position as under James. Nor could his prospects be thought worse. For it is hardly true to say that James "would presumably have advanced his fortune," since James had put Feversham over him at Sedgemoor at the beginning of his reign and at the Revolution and had given Churchill nothing to do between, either as soldier or diplomatist. Had James grown stronger, Churchill could only have fared worse, unless he had changed his religion. His preference for Feversham, a poor soldier and a Protestant, was hardly consistent with a great esteem for Churchill. It was justified by Feversham's fidelity. James, in fact, could not have complained much of him if it had been true, as Wolesley believes,

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that he “openly announced” that he would “abandon James” if he attacked the English laws and the English Church, and that he had “solemnly warned the King not to attempt the re-establishment of Popery.” He had not threatened to abandon James, but to quit his service; he had not openly announced it, but had said it to Lord Galway. The story of his “solemn warning” at Winchester lacks proof and probability. To establish further this solemnity, Wolseley has the art to mention that “he so fully realized the gravity of his decision that he made his will in the summer of this year.” But Churchill had also made a will before going to Holland with his Brigade in 1678. He had to risk his life whichever side he took.

VI : THE EARL OF MARLBOROUGH

WILLIAM III had now two wars on hand, one in Ireland against James, one in defence of his native country against Louis XIV. Marlborough went out in May, 1689, at the head of the English troops who were to join the Dutch against the French. He may have preferred not to fight against fellow subjects led by his old King and master, and William may have thought it discreeter to give him a separate command, and that abroad. The Prince of Waldeck, the Dutch commander, did not deprive him of success or credit. After a long inaction the army crossed the Sambre and advanced as far as Walcourt, a few miles east of the French border, and not much farther south of Charleroi. Walcourt itself was garrisoned by the Dutch. The French assaulted it in vain, and then attacked the main allied army and was beating it when Marlborough took them in flank with the English cavalry, forcing them to retire. Prince Waldeck particularly praised the English troops for their behaviour and Marlborough for his generalship, saying that he showed more talent in this one battle than older Generals in many years. He had turned the "sickly, listless, undisciplined and disorderly" troops of whom Waldeck complained, into a fighting power acknowledged by the enemy as well as the allies. The King himself wrote to express his "esteem and

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friendship," and made him Colonel of the Royal Fusiliers.

While Marlborough was fighting in the Netherlands his Countess was fighting at home for the Princess Anne against the King. It was proposed to grant Anne an independent revenue of £70,000 instead of leaving her with £30,000 to come from the King's pocket at his own will, and Lady Marlborough took the Princess's part in spite of approaches from the other side. At last the difference was split, and Anne's income fixed at £50,000. She gave her friend £1,000 a year in gratitude for her services, while it was alleged that she lost very much larger sums to her by gambling. Some said that the King bribed the Marlboroughs to persuade Anne to accept the compromise, so that they made money both ways. Perhaps William was alarmed at the extent of their influence even when used in his behalf, or perhaps they had not used it enough—they had not (as how could they?) used it to persuade Anne to forego her claim to the throne, supposing William should survive Mary; and the Countess had almost directly opposed the Queen's wishes when asked to prevent Prince George from serving as a naval volunteer, but without letting Anne know. The Countess was satisfied with ruling Anne, whether she looked ahead or not. Marlborough possibly did look ahead and saw that it might be discreet to side with Anne. In any case, while Mary felt unable to trust or esteem him and disliked the Countess, William began to disapprove of the Marlboroughs for this reason or that. He liked his own generals at his side best, men of his bookish school of war, men who had not betrayed King James, as Marlborough had,

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as he had himself. Of one thing we can be sure, William did not punish Marlborough because his brother, Captain George Churchill, extorted payment from merchantmen whom he convoyed. Wolseley says this weighed against him, even though it is likely that his influence got his brother speedily out of prison. "From some cause which we are unable to trace," Marlborough was not sent to Flanders for the campaign of 1690 and the defeat of Fleurus. It is said, however, that William pressed him to join him in Ireland for the Boyne campaign, and that he "frankly declined acting against his former Sovereign and benefactor" in person. Yet the position he held during this campaign hardly proves that William either distrusted or disliked him. He commanded the forces left in England, and was one of the Mary's Council of nine, at a time when Jacobite conspirators were hard at work in the ranks of the army, and when the French fleet beat the English off Beachy Head and might have landed. His chance came when James had lost Ireland: Cork and Kinsale had to be taken, and he volunteered to take them while William was engaged with Limerick. Though he was in a minority on the Council, he persuaded Mary and convinced the King. Such secrecy was kept that the Admiralty did not know where the fleet was bound or what the men were for. It was late for such an expedition; the fleet could not be got off until the middle of September; yet Marlborough made it successful. The King had returned to London just before the start. Marlborough wrote ahead to the commander left in Ireland, Ginkel, asking for the help of English officers and troops on landing; instead of which, he was saddled with the Duke of

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Wirtemberg as a partner. After four days he sailed into Cork harbour, his frigates silencing the fire from the forts at the mouth of it. He was allowed to land his troops without loss. A few of the enemy lined the hedges along the route to his position near the city, but were beaten out easily. The enemy vacated or burnt the suburbs and left to Marlborough an outlying fort that commanded the Castle and the city. Thus Cork was closely invested by the English, Germans and Danes on every side, and on the third day they had cut off the principal fort from the city gates. The Irish forces, under Berwick and other Jacobites neither attacked nor exerted any pressure. Then appeared the young Duke of Wirtemberg with a commission to take command. He was resolute on the strength of his birth, Marlborough as much so because he had the work well in hand and a reputation to make. They settled the difficulty by a compromise : Marlborough and the Duke were to take the command in turns. Next day Marlborough gave "Wirtemberg" as the password, and the day afterwards the Duke returned the compliment by giving "Marlborough." The Governor of the city was able to gain a little time by negotiating with the Generals separately and then breaking off when the tide had begun to make it impossible to cross river and marsh, as Marlborough had meant to do in order to assault the walls where the artillery had breached them. But next day, the fifth, the walls were again attacked both from the land batteries and from ships in the river. At low tide the Danes and the English crossed and were at the breach when there was another parley. The city surrendered and the garrison became prisoners of war. Among the

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English officers serving were Charles Churchill and the Duke of Grafton, Charles II's son by his mistress, the Duchess of Cleveland, Marlborough's cousin and former mistress. The Duke was killed.

Marlborough then moved on to Kinsale, where an advance party had already taken possession of the town and summoned the garrison of the forts to surrender. Rain fell continually. The roads were heavy, and delayed the moving of the artillery. Many of the men were sick. It was October, and the English dreaded wintering in Irish rains. Money for pay and provisions was short. But Marlborough had luck. He ordered a party to cross the river in darkness and attack the Old Fort. This they were able to do with success. They approached unnoticed, and at the moment when the besieged were rushing to the weakest point an explosion killed many and disorganised the rest; the assaulting party killed or took prisoners the whole of this garrison. The other fort was battered and mined for several days, but they asked for terms just as it came to the point of a general assault. They agreed on terms. In seven weeks, therefore, after he left Portsmouth, Marlborough was back in London, having done what he set out to do and established such men as had to be left behind in their winter quarters under Charles Churchill. King William welcomed him, and said that he knew no man who had served so few campaigns who was so fit for command. Both sieges were "almost equally bald of incident because equally skilfully and quietly conducted." From a military point of view this campaign was the one redeeming event in William's Irish wars, so Wolseley pronounces.

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It stood out in the public eye as quick and masterly. People were delighted with the success of an English General with a high proportion of English troops.

Nevertheless, Dutch generals continued to direct the war in Ireland. Marlborough was merely on the Irish Committee, and had the care of the army in England and its recruiting. He now began to correspond with James over the water. It seems he wanted to be forgiven for acting as he had done at Salisbury in accordance with the inviolable dictates of his conscience. For the future he promised loyalty. William was in Holland negotiating the "Grand Alliance" that bound the Empire, the United Netherlands, and England, chiefly to resist Louis XIV. His ministers, the men of the Revolution, like Marlborough, were repenting in letters to James. Marlborough was not only sorry James had gone but wanted him back." In treachery so extensive, which is the prevailing vice of a revolutionary period, it is matter rather of regret than of surprise to find Marlborough implicated." So says his obedient and humble posthumous servant, Archdeacon Coxe. "The cold and repulsive deportment" of William towards the revolution men, and his preference for Dutchmen was too much for Marlborough. But above all, says Coxe, the motive of these treacherous correspondents was "the apprehension that a change of public sentiment might eventually restore King James." They showed contrition, therefore, to him, and anxiety to atone. He and Godolphin even "made many communications on the state of public affairs and domestic transactions." That they wished to please James is certain. It is almost as certain that

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they gave away only what was not very valuable, but might be considered enough to purchase his forgiveness, "in case of a counter revolution." The professions of loyalty were "merely illusory." For so afterwards thought James himself. His historian, Clarke, says that he found no effect from these mighty promises. When James wanted him to fulfil some offer of bringing over the English troops in Flanders, he would not, and made the excuse that there had been "some mistake in the message," and that he intended not to bring over the troops in small parties but all together—later on. James perfectly understood that Marlborough chiefly sought a written pardon for himself, the Countess, Godolphin, and others, in return for "bare words and empty promises, which, under pretence of being suspected, or doing greater service afterwards, there was never found suitable time to put the least of them in execution." Yet he gave the pardon.

Wolseley thinks that Marlborough really loathed James' principles and acted solely from selfish motives. He must, then, have feared and believed that James would return, and rather than fight on William's side and perhaps lose and have to reduce his expenditure on himself and his family, he would treat with James and run the risk of being detected by William. Not that it was a fearful risk. Where so many were implicated, probably none would suffer seriously. But I do not see how such conduct is consistent with the conscientiousness of the first betrayal except on the ground that plotting was a mania or confirmed bad habit with him, so long as there was some one to plot with who had a chance.

So Marlborough gave information and advice

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which were to help James to recover his crown ; and professed himself ready at command to abandon wife, children and country to regain his esteem, and I surmise that if he had had to forsake William, and William had let him, he would have left behind him a letter not less “ manly and touching ” than his farewell to James at Salisbury. It is superfluous to imagine that perhaps he was subject to recurrences of a belief in the Divine Right of Kings—that at times “ he almost repented ” of his disloyalty to James.

William, perhaps, did not suspect these things at first, though early in 1691 Lord Sidney was reporting to him that Marlborough was behaving better and with more diligence than before. In May he joined William for the Flanders campaign. His work was chiefly administration. No battles were fought. There was no siege even. They marched about in Flanders in the hope of inducing the French, under Luxemburg, to fight at a disadvantage. But Marlborough distinguished himself by his skill in moving and providing for the troops, so that one day the Prince of Vaudemont answered a question of the King’s by saying that of the English generals, Kirke had fire, Lanier thought, Mackay skill, Colchester bravery, but that there was “ something inexpressible in the Earl of Marlborough, and all their virtues seemed to be united in him : if he had any skill in physiognomy,” said he, “ no other Englishman would rise to such a height of military glory as was waiting for him.” William replied with a smile that he believed Marlborough would do his part to verify the prediction. Thus he maintained his reputation and still excited hope and curiosity. With all his grace, too, that could condescend to

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fawn for a purpose, he would not be put upon. Once, when Count Solmes, one of William's Dutchmen, was with the army, Marlborough was neglected, and the Count ordered his baggage on the march to take the place of the Englishman's and cut it out of the line. But "with his cane lifted up and some hard words in French," Marlborough caused his baggage to take its place. A single combat was expected until Solmes "sheared off." In this campaign also Marlborough experienced, not for the last time, the vexations caused by the presence in the field of an advisory committee of civilians from the States General of the United Provinces.

Still Marlborough had to wait. He applied in vain to succeed Schomberg as Master General of the Ordnance. His friends also had in vain asked for a Garter for him. After these disappointments he spoke aloud his disgust at the preferment of Dutchmen instead of Englishmen. He said that William favoured Dutchmen in the army as James did Irishmen. Except with English troops he was unwilling to serve again in Flanders. His phrases for certain of the King's favourites were well known and repeated by the Countess and her friends. Naturally William heard them, and Marlborough is said also to have openly complained to him of the large grants of Crown land to Dutch families, and used terms showing that he was the spokesman of several discontented "faithful servants"; in fact, he said emphatically that he himself had no cause to complain. Here again he is said to have issued a warning as to the "disasters which might be the result of such unpopular conduct." But the evidence is as before. And as in the case of the remonstrance

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with James at Winchester, the King was angered. If Marlborough said anything like this to him he knew his man too well to fear that he would be quick to take steps in active conspiracy; he would have been angered, if at all, at the impudence of alluding thus to his treachery. From Marlborough's point of view, the remark would have been indiscreet. For at that time he had plans for moving an address to the King against the employment of foreigners and against the foreign troops still in England. It is possible that this scheme was the foundation on which the story mentioned arose. It was upset by a Jacobite who had imagined it at first a plot to restore James and then grew so afraid that Anne was to be crowned instead, that he betrayed Marlborough. But the story, doubtless, owes something to Marlborough's conversation at the time of his disappointments, conversation addressed, however, to his friends and only reported to the King; it was apparently threatening and free, and implied a union of the officers to repair their wrongs; and it was also abusive. Gossip said, too, that while the King was putting on his shirt and spitting with a consumptive cough, Marlborough "wished it would be his last," just as he had "loll'd out his tongue" and laughed at James reviewing his troops. The man who tells this, however, points out that Marlborough was "a nice courtier, well-guarded in his words, and one of the most mannerly, best bred men in the nation."* He does not think Marlborough capable of such an indiscretion as to use words that would be barbarous and brutal from a porter. His

* "Short Narrative of the Life and Actions of the Duke of Marlborough," 1711.

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circle used familiarly to refer to William as "the monster," "Caliban," and "the Dutch abortion."

If William knew these things it was very natural for him to tell the Prince of Vaudemont that Marlborough was a vile man whom he hated, "for though he could profit of treasons he could not bear the traitor." And suddenly he was disgraced for having "used words against the King," so Evelyn thought. He was dismissed from his offices, his wife was forbidden the Court, and Anne, having been desired by the Queen to dismiss her and having refused, retired to Sion House. The disgrace was sudden: one morning after Marlborough had given William his shirt, as his duty was, but whether with any rudeness under his breath is not told. Two hours later they brought him news that he was dismissed and forbidden the Court.

Where there were so many reasons for disgracing Marlborough it is hard to say precisely what the cause was. Horace Walpole tells a story as true which another writer regards as mostly a design to disgrace Marlborough.* It is that he betrayed to the French the plan William had for taking Dunkirk while it was undefended. He himself was to have had a share in the attack. But the French began setting the town in readiness for a defence and the plan was abandoned. Walpole says that Marlborough swore he had told it to nobody but his wife, and that William replied that he did not tell it to his. Once in Lady Marlborough's head it might rapidly have got to a Jacobite, and then to a French ear. The accusation against Marlborough was fresh even in

* "Short Narrative of the Life and Actions of the Duke of Marlborough," 1711.

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1711 in the minds of the common people, and farmers over their pots of ale at market would shake their heads at "Malbur" (for so they called him) for losing Dunkirk.* But the fact is that the design on Dunkirk came some months after Marlborough's disgrace.

Another explanation is that Mary had lately quarrelled again with Anne over the Marlboroughs, objecting to the £1,000 a year which she was allowing to the Countess. Marlborough's disgrace would, it might have been thought, compel Anne to give up his wife. But William did not take the step for this alone. He said something about the correspondence with James; this also is alleged. And what Evelyn heard at first was that Marlborough was dismissed "for his excessive taking of bribes, covetousness, and extortions on all occasions from his inferior officers"; this also was being talked of. Judging from a remark of Burnet's, quoted in Wolesley from the "Rough Draft" of his history, an accumulation of offences account for the fall—the intrigue with James and France, the factious attitude towards the Dutch officers and officials, the influence exercised on Anne to the disadvantage of Mary. All we know is that Anne and the Marlboroughs could not have been surprised.

Lady Marlborough was not forbidden the Court till a short time after when she had shown that without formal notice she would continue to appear. She offered to leave Anne in order not to involve her "For Christ Jesus's sake" Anne begged her not to suggest any such thing, since if she left her she would never again enjoy

* "Short Narrative of the Life and Actions of the Duke of Marlborough," 1711.

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a quiet hour. The result was that Anne only saw her sister once again during her lifetime.

An anonymous letter had informed Anne in January, at the time of the disgrace, that more was to follow. In May, while William was abroad, a French invasion threatened the country. The people were in terror. The Cabinet Council ordered the arrest of several known or suspected Jacobites, and among them Marlborough, on a charge of high treason. But the particular evidence for this arrest was bad. One Young had forged a document in which Marlborough and others associated themselves in an undertaking to help James to regain the throne. Marlborough was able to swear truthfully that he had not put his hand to the letters attributed to him ; but though Young was convicted of forgery, and though the French never landed and their fleet was beaten off Cape La Hogue by the Jacobite Lord Russell, Marlborough was not free until mid-June, and then only on a writ of habeas corpus. Anne herself at one time had fears of being surrounded by a guard. She protested that she would not have repined, so long as the Countess continued kind ; she wished that she might never enjoy a moment's happiness in this world or the next if she ever proved false to the Countess. Anne, too, was among the Jacobites. But she was powerless to help Marlborough. Two of the lords, Halifax and Shrewsbury, who went surety for him when he was admitted to bail, had their names erased at once from the list of Privy Councillors. With no specific charge against him, his bail was not released until this illegality had been violently debated in the House of Lords, and in the end the King himself discharged the recognisance. This

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was quite in keeping with his remark that he did not want to push Marlborough too far, but to warn rather than punish him.

While Marlborough was being fretted thus, William was lumbering through Flanders and losing the battle of Steinkirk and a great many English lives. A strong party in both Houses of Parliament took Marlborough's line against the Dutch officers, and in the House of Lords his influence was direct, but not strong enough to reduce the Supplies voted for the campaign to come.

Marlborough, out of the Tower and out of office, had too much leisure not to continue his correspondence with James. He had no doubt put money by ; his wife still attended Anne and drew her salary ; he himself was offered £1,000 a year for a place which Anne was willing to create, and, though he refused it, both of them practically lived with Anne at Berkeley House. Had he formed the habit of plotting as an intellectual recreation when he could not dance or play tennis, this idleness was not likely to break it. William was again in Flanders in 1693. The battle of Neerwinden, as usual, he lost, and with the English people he gained no credit from the endurance and brilliance of the English troops in their defeat. If anything, Marlborough's disgrace would gain credit for him with James. In this strengthened position he extracted a proclamation promising all sorts of things at the coming restoration—Parliament to meet, the Church to be safeguarded, the Test Act enforced, and everyone pardoned. He also even lectured James as to the meekness which he was required to show if the proposals made to him should seem hard. As

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before, the chief English Admiral, Russell, was a conspirator, but with Marlburian moderation. They made great promises while out of office, and great excuses for their caution in office. Marlborough actually told James that he would not take office under William without James's consent.

In the spring of 1694 he committed his most conspicuous act of treason on behalf of James. An expedition sailed against Brest. Marlborough and others forewarned James. Brest was ready, and repulsed the expedition with heavy loss.

Preparations for this expedition were going on when an agent arrived in London from James. He took back an account to his master which had been given him by Godolphin, one of William's ministers and a great friend of Marlborough. Shortly afterwards came the same information by letter from Marlborough, with most earnest prayers that "for the love of God" it be kept secret. He gave the size of the expedition, the name of the commander (Talmach or Tollemache), and the object—Brest. Furthermore, he accused Admiral Russell of keeping this information from him, "a bad sign of this man's intentions." Godolphin must have given it to him, perhaps without admitting it was already in James' hands; for otherwise Marlborough could hardly have written with such urgency if he knew, and James knew, that he was only confirming Godolphin.

But before his letter arrived on May 4th, Louis had already sent orders to Vauban for the strengthening of Brest.* Later, more pressing orders were sent to him which might have been the result of Marlborough's letter. The English

* E. M. Lloyd in "English Historical Review." Vol. 9, 1894.

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on their arrival judged that an attack was hopeless. Only Talmach would stick to it, and carried the others with him. He was wounded at the outset. They had to retreat, and a large proportion of the men were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners before they could get into the boats. Talmach died of his wounds soon after landing in England.

It is now probable that Marlborough did not cause this disaster. But unless the eagerness of his letter was a blind to conceal his knowledge that he was delivering stale news, he was willing to have caused it. And if he knew that it was stale, then he knew that Godolphin had already given it, and he was a traitorous accomplice for concealing his knowledge from William.

Talmach's death caused the suspicion that Marlborough plotted to bring it about. For Talmach might be regarded as his English rival. He was Marlborough's age. He had fought at Tangier and in Flanders as a young man. Before deserting James II and joining William in Holland he gave up his colonelcy. Under William he fought in Ireland and again in Flanders, at Steinkirk, and Neerwinden. When Marlborough was disgraced, Talmach took his place as Lieutenant-General, first in Flanders, then in England against the expected invasion. He, too, had not concealed his opinion of the Dutch officers. Marlborough may have been jealous of him, but there is no proof that besides being lucky himself, he could make his enemies unlucky, even when they were not opposed to him in the field: no proof that Talmach had the power of divination, without which he could not have known that English treachery had made Brest prepared for him.

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Wolseley is satisfied that Marlborough persuaded himself, as an injured man, that it could not be wrong to give James information which had already been received from others: that it was merely a piece of dirtyish smartness—"nothing he had to tell, as he was well aware, could therefore be really injurious to English interests; whereas, if cleverly laid before James, the intelligence would have such an air of treachery to William that it could not fail to strengthen the exiled King's belief in his good faith." That is to say, Marlborough did not mind who else injured English interests so long as he himself did not directly do so. It would be fairer to Marlborough to say that he was a plain man with no sentiments when he was at work, and on this occasion he was at work as a diplomatist for himself and family. If he had not afterwards risen to such grandeur that ordinary taste would prefer to see him equalling in virtue King Arthur or Albert the Good, nobody would have troubled with his case more than with little Sidney Godolphin's, whom Lady Marlborough called "the best man that ever lived."

At this very time Marlborough put forward his name, or had it put forward, for office. But William only said: "I do not think it for the good of my service to entrust the command of my troops to him." The death of Queen Mary at the end of the year improved his chances. Anne was now heir to the throne. Not without the advice of the Marlboroughs she made a "spontaneous overture" to the King, regretting the differences between Mary and herself and showing her readiness to wait on him once more. William saw her, welcomed her, and gave her the palace

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of St. James's for her residence. Marlborough's "reversion" was great, but he got nothing immediately. Again William passed a campaign in Flanders—that of 1695—without him. Namur was taken from the French by William (and Captain Toby Shandy).

The year after this Marlborough had another set-back. Sir John Fenwick, a Jacobite implicated in a plot to assassinate William, was arrested, and, throwing himself upon the King's mercy, he accused a number of semi-Jacobites like Godolphin, Marlborough, and Russell. Fenwick, however, would not answer all the questions asked of him at the Bar of the House of Commons and was ordered to withdraw. The charges were declared false and scandalous. A Bill of Attainder against Fenwick passed the Commons and came to the Lords, where Marlborough and Godolphin vindicated themselves, as Russell had done in the Commons, by denying that they had ever held any conversation with the man on any account whatsoever. For in fact they had not; he spoke from the general knowledge of the Jacobite circle. While he denied the imputation, Marlborough said he had some satisfaction in finding himself in such good company as Godolphin and the rest. One of his opponents, but in secret, was Lord Monmouth, afterwards Lord Peterborough. He had sent Fenwick a paper of instructions as to his defence. Marlborough, for example, was to be cross-questioned on the causes of his late dismissal, and the King was to be appealed to. When Fenwick refused this service, Monmouth voted for the Bill of Attainder, and then he was betrayed. The House of Lords sent him to the Tower, the King struck him off the Privy Council.

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Towards the end of 1697 Godolphin, in a fright, retired from the Treasury. But next year Marlborough at last gained a position. The Duke of Shrewsbury, his fellow conspirator, and Secretary of State since 1694, had often spoken on behalf of him to William. Sunderland, the darkest and cleverest of all these lovers of liberty, Sacharissa's son, Protestant one side, Catholic the other, who knows what inside, had just come out into office from the inner gloom of confidential adviser, and he was well disposed towards Marlborough as to all men of ability who were not fools. He, with Shrewsbury and Dutch Albemarle, recommended Marlborough for the post of governor to Anne's son, the Duke of Gloucester. Anne, as a matter of course, agreed. William at length consented with the compliment: "My Lord, teach him to be like yourself, and my nephew will never want for accomplishments." For this the salary was £2,000. At the same time he was restored to his place in the Privy Council and in the army. His coadjutor, preceptor to the young prince, was Gilbert Burnet, the Scotch bishop of Salisbury, a Whig, who had a sackful of compliments to his face for Marlborough. The appointments gave less than universal satisfaction. Burnet was first attacked as a Whig, and Marlborough had to persuade his brother, George Churchill, the sailor M.P. for St. Albans, not to appear in the Commons when a motion against the bishop was put to the vote. For if Burnet had gone, Marlborough must probably have followed. Though Tory in principle, Marlborough had thrown in his lot with Whigs more or less irrevocably since he joined the Whig Revolutionists who turned out James, and the awkwardness of

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his seat in this place might well explain his dislike of politics. But for the time being he had nothing but politics to occupy him. The Peace of Ryswick in 1697 had suspended the wars with Louis XIV, and the English army was reduced on a motion of Robert Harley. The regiments raised since September, 1680, were to be disbanded. People were willing to believe that peace had really set in. England had gained neither glory nor possessions abroad, and when only a few thousand troops remained in England, the fleet, the weather, or the miscalculation of the enemy, had sufficed to keep these shores inviolate. The only invader who might have succeeded was James Stuart. Had he landed it is likely that there would have been more fighting than in 1688, and Marlborough would inevitably have been on the winning side. He was now in a substantial position. While William was in Holland he was made one of the Lord Justices to govern the country. His daughters began to marry. Henrietta married Godolphin's son in 1698; at the beginning of 1700 Anne married Lord Spencer, Sunderland's eldest son. Godolphin was a very old friend of Marlborough's. He was Charles II's "little Sidney Godolphin," who was never in the way and never out of the way, a diligent, honest finance minister, a sporting squire, but withal a timid one and a traitor like the rest of them, both to James II and William III. With Lady Marlborough he was so friendly that people imagined, or at least spread a report, that he was something more. When the children were married Henrietta Churchill was eighteen, and Francis Godolphin but twenty. Lady Sunderland was an intimate friend of Lady Marlborough, and had made Anne jealous of her. Her son was

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comparatively a very upright man, a cold rasping character of republican professions and something like plain speech. Sunderland, who would say anything, promised that he should nevertheless be accommodating as a son-in-law, and went so far as to say that if he saw him settled he would desire nothing more than to die in peace "if it please God." Marlborough, who did not favour uncompromising Whigs, was long being persuaded. The young man, too, was still mourning his first wife, and required some tempting, while Anne Churchill was not attracted to him. But, as Coxe put it, at length her charms and accomplishments dissipated the grief of the young widower, and he felt all the passion which her youth, beauty and merit could not fail to inspire; the impression sank deep in his reserved but ardent mind; he ended by showing no less anxiety for the alliance than his parents. So both daughters were married, with £5,000 apiece from their father, and £5,000 apiece from the Princess Anne.

VII : THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

MARLBOROUGH was now nearly fifty, Godolphin fifty-five, Sunderland sixty. They and their contemporaries could remember when the army was as small as it was now being made, and the Dutch got to the Medway, and all the money the King needed was for his mistresses, or if he wanted an army it was for King Louis, and King Louis would pay for it. Most of the statesmen of 1698 had been bred in the Court of Charles II. James had proved too much for them : he had as it were disturbed their bawdy Paradise, even during Charles' reign, and offered them nothing reasonable in exchange. They plotted against him, they ran some risks, and they brought in another King as uncomfortable with a crowd of "Froglanders" about him as objectionable as Papists. With no alternative to William but James their middle age was undoubtedly harsh. They yearned after the fleshpots of the Restoration. Religion, says Halifax, is a cheerful thing : "Nothing unpleasant belongs to it, though the spiritual cooks have done their unskilful part to give an ill relish to it." A wise epicure "would be religious for the sake of pleasure ; good sense is the foundation of both." So he says to his daughter, but elsewhere he says that "most men's anger about religion is as if two men should quarrel for a lady they neither of them care for." But he was a thinker. Marlborough

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with his God who had given up to party what was meant for mankind, speaks more religiously when he tells Godolphin that a campaign is ended to his heart's desire, and as "the hand of the Almighty is visible in the whole matter," he hopes the Queen will "think it due to him to return public thanks; and, at the same time, to implore his blessing on the next campaign." When he had done what he could to install the right sort of bishop in a vacancy, he exclaimed, "I have done what in me is, so God's will be done." Godolphin, on the other hand, was resolved to keep the bishoprics vacant, rather than admit enemies. God was the power that brought Marlborough luck and destroyed his enemies. When he was anxious about home politics, he said . . . 'but *as God is above*, so I trust in Him, or else our prospect is very dreadful." He advises Lady Marlborough to put her trust in God as he does, adding "be assured that I can't be unhappy as long as you are kind." Even Anne, at the best of times, could not say much more for Lady Marlborough's religion than that she was a Christian, though she made no bustle about it, and that she abhorred the Church of Rome. She believed also in "balm of Gilead twice a day." Their daughter Anne, who married Lord Spencer, Sunderland's heir, showed the same faith, but in a tender mood, in the letter which she left for her husband to read when she was dead. He and her dear children, she wrote, were her only concern in this world; she hoped in God he would find comfort for the loss of a wife she was sure he loved too well not to want a great deal. She would be no further remembered than what would contribute to his ease, that is, to be careful (as

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she was) not to make his circumstances uneasy, by living beyond his means, which she could not, with all the care that was possible, quite prevent. When he had any addition to his income he must think of his poor children, and remember that he had not an estate to live on, without making some addition, by saving. He would always, she thought, be miserable if he gave way to the love of play. As to the children, he was to get her mother, the Duchess of Marlborough, to take care of the girls and the boys also if she left any too little to go to school ; for to be left to servants is very bad for children, and a man cannot take the care of little children that a woman can. . . She ended by saying that her last prayers should be for blessings on him in this world and their happy meeting in the next. But there is nothing in it to lead us to suppose she would have been disturbed had she read Godolphin's letter to her father where he says that the question is not so much what is wrong and what is right, but what gives a handle to the Duke of Somerset to tell lies. . . . She would have smiled at her mother's secretary describing the same Duke as, without doubt, "as honest as it is possible for so great a statesman to be." Perhaps she would not have been astonished when her mother wrote to the Queen to point out that she could not carry on her Government if she disobliged the Whigs, because they would "join with any people" to torment her and her true servants.

There, at least, the Duchess was telling what she believed to be the truth. Sometimes Anne tells a plain truth with the most refreshing effect, as when she says she would never give an invitation to the Electoral Prince (afterwards

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George II), the Elector (afterwards George I), or the Electress Sophia—"neither to the young man, nor his father, nor his grandmother."

A certain mixture of hardness or coarseness and effusiveness is characteristic of the age. They had ceased to breed poets or to need them, and they were left free to use "the language of the heart" in its extreme form, especially for purposes of adulation. The only poet was Prior, and his only poems were a pretty compliment to a nobleman's little daughter and a genial elegy on a plain, sensible old mistress. But take the case of John Lord Cutts, one of Marlborough's generals. He had fought against Turks, Irish and French, and in London made a great display in the fire which burnt down Whitehall in 1698. His bravery was notorious, for he talked of nothing else, and nobody disputed it. Burnet, in fact, says that he lost the honour due to many of his brave acts by talking too much of them. His debts were almost as celebrated. And he was orthodox of the orthodox, was a member of Parliament most of his life, and died Commander-in-Chief in Ireland and a Lord Justice. But he wrote verses. "Practical exercises upon several occasions" he published in 1687 and dedicated to Mary, the Princess of Orange. For him Boileau was the only critic, and he had his reward. For when he wrote of hunting, which he probably knew something about, it was in this style :

The bright, the chaste Diana I'll adore,
She'll free my heart from love's insulting power.
Yet he compared himself to the ploughman
whistling, the milkmaid singing : for even so he
sang his heedless thought in wild notes :

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And made the neighbouring groves and echoes
ring.

In a "Letter from a Scholar of Mars to one of
Apollo," he explains, however :

My genius points to other ways
And bids me strive for laurels, not for bays,
I'll keep my heart for great Bellona's charms ;
If e'er she takes me to her glorious arms
She shall command my fortune and my life.
My muse is but my mistress, not my wife.

But skill in words was the common one of that
age. It concealed his meaning : if that had been
possible, it would have concealed his character.
Between his acts and his words there is the same
disparity as between the private beliefs of Lord
Bolingbroke (in nothing in particular), and his
public action as a supporter of the Schism Act
which forbade dissenters to teach children except
in noblemen's families. But either of these men
could on occasion speak as plain as they acted,
and could act without frills or flourishes. Men had
really no difficulty in being plain, then as now.

One day an Austrian, Count Zobor, made the
remark that three rogues caused a great deal of
mischief in the world, and he mentioned two—
Prince Rogotsky, the Hungarian leader, and
King Stanislas of Poland. As the third, however,
was unmistakably Charles XII of Sweden, the
Swedish envoy, who was present, felt himself
"obliged to give him a box on the ear." Not
satisfied with this, Charles XII regarded the
remark as a pretext for war with the Emperor.
Charles, hero as he was, was willing to listen to
the kind of speech that Marlborough made to

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him in 1707 : “ I present to your Majesty a letter not from the Chancery, but from the Heart of the Queen, my mistress, and written with her own hand. Had not her sex prevented it, she would have crossed the sea to see a Prince admired by the whole world. I am in this particular more happy than the Queen, and I wish I could serve some campaigns under so great a General as your Majesty, that I might learn what I yet want to know in the art of war.” The Duke got as much of this as he gave. A man (John Mackqueen) dedicated a book to the husbands of his daughters, and told them that they had “ obtained ” ladies who, by their sound sentiments of religion, their intellectual endowments and moral accomplishments, as well as beautiful aspect, graceful mien, and charming address, were the wonder of their age, the glory of their sex, the ornament of the Court, the cordial of their parents in their declining years, crowns of joy to their husbands, the admiration of foreigners, a common benediction to present and future generations ; for what could be expected of them but a race of nobles, who through God’s goodness might prove public-spirited patriots, zealous defenders of the Protestant faith, loyal supporters of the throne, steady maintainers of the Church, and strenuous promoters of their country’s interest and renown ? The poet Prior, who was a good poet for a diplomatist, and not a good diplomatist, wrote no better than this in compliment to Marlborough, before it was convenient to become his enemy. Statesmen could do nothing easier than emit phrases like : “ I have no motive but the honour of the Queen and the service of her minister.” It is remarkable how many of them praised

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themselves. Halifax, for example, writes to Marlborough to say that if Marlborough only knew, he had really acted very well (it had by no means appeared so); but "as there is generosity in acting such a part, there is good breeding and good manners in not explaining particulars that have not been successful." Lord Sunderland tells Marlborough that he is at ease because he has resolved "as an honest man," whatever happens, to act upon the same principle and with the same people as always. Harley writes to him that he also is at ease, having the satisfaction to know that he has always served Marlborough and Godolphin "with the nicest honour and by the strictest rules of friendship." Marlborough himself says time after time that he is much more concerned for the Queen's quiet and good than for his own life, so that it is a relief to hear him say at a time when he is much put out, that he "can't hinder wishing that the Queen may prosper," although he thinks it impossible she will if she employs his enemies. You would think Halifax wished to be regarded as a susceptible girl, instead of a man who has just missed a place and is very angry, when he writes to beg the Duchess not to imagine him so vain as to be much disturbed by missing the most expensive, troublesome and dangerous place in the world; but to believe on the other hand that he is almost distracted that he cannot by any means get a share of Marlborough's esteem and friendship: he hopes she will pity and forgive him for his intention to deserve them; and off he goes, probably, for his revenge. An ordinary phrase for a man to use who meant nothing was that he had an intention and desire "to live well with" the person addressed, and his party and also "with

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all others we would have him live well with ” ; whereupon the other answers with compliments from himself and party and does not doubt but their friends will be “ all in the same disposition.”

Swift’s “ Journal to Stella ” reveals more directly than the letters of the politicians. One day he tears the journal open to add that his party is safe now, having disgraced and turned out Marlborough, because the Queen has given them a majority in the Lords by creating twelve Peers. And “ three of the new lords are of our Society.” Next day he is at Court, resolved to be very civil to the Whigs, and seeing Lady Sunderland (Marlborough’s daughter Anne) and others whispering about himself, he asks Rochester to take a message to her saying he doubted she was not as much in love with him as he with her ; but Rochester would not. Up came the Duchess of Shrewsbury and clapped her fan up to hide them while he and she gave one another joy of this change. Marlborough was there, but hardly noticed by anyone. His enemies had come in under the skirts of the waiting woman who had taken his wife’s place with Anne—Mrs. Masham. A year or two later Mrs. Masham’s eldest son was very ill. Swift doubted he would not live, and she stayed at Kensington to nurse him, which, says he, “ vexes us all.” She was so excessively fond of her son it made him mad. She should never leave the Queen, but leave everything else, to stick to what is so much the interest of the public,—of the Tory party,—as well as her own. He told her this ; but it was talking to the winds.

Party was so strong as to make Swift a party man. He called a Parliament free which contained a majority of his party. Liberty was a word. Even

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Kings used it. The King Charles whom England and her allies had thrust upon Spain, writing to Marlborough for subsidies, says that of course he entertains only views that are most useful to the common cause "and most advantageous to the liberty of Europe." The English Parliament, both Houses, ended an address to the Queen at the time of a Jacobite scare, by announcing that they would go on to the end with the war, to restore Spain to Austria, to recover "the liberties of Europe." Marlborough, taking advantage of a victory, to press on the Queen the claims of the party carrying on the war, points out that only by making use of these men can "our religion and liberties" be preserved. He repeats in a letter to his wife the belief that he is acting for "the liberties of Europe." Prior used it when he "sang" how Anne

Sent forth the terror of her high commands,
To save the nations from invading hands,
To prop fair Liberty's declining cause,
And fix the jarring world with equal laws.

The phrase was just part of the effusiveness which the age had somehow assumed for protective colouring to cloak its hardness. When the hardness comes through as in Swift's satire, Savile's sense, or the Duchess of Marlborough's temper, it is by comparison a beautiful thing. Hear her describing the brother of her enemy, Mrs. Masham, whom she had once been as kind to as to her own child. She had got him made a page and then a bed-chamber groom, and Marlborough thought him good-for-nothing, but to oblige her, made him his *aide-de-camp*, and afterwards gave him a regiment. Well, when

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Mr. Harley attacked the Duke in Parliament, this honest Jack Hill, this once ragged boy whom she clothed, was sick in bed, but was persuaded by his sister to get up, wrap himself "in warmer clothes than those I gave him," and go and vote against the Duke. This temper may have done Marlborough some harm, and shortened the European war by putting power in England into the hands of the Tories, but it is one of the things out of that age that we have to be thankful for.

VIII : NEITHER WHIG NOR TORY

MARLBOROUGH was for some time sunk in politics. The Whigs, who were shortly to leave office, were jealous of him. He was also accused of being governed in everything by Lord Sunderland. Skilful and amiable as he was, and used to dissimulation, he suffered from the discomforts of his position, and complained of the jealousy surrounding him. But the cloud which had been hanging over him was clearing up, so said the Duke of Shrewsbury. The King even spoke to him of his desire to leave England altogether, in his indignation at the reduction of the army and the personal attacks involved in it. His brother George was admitted to the Admiralty. If the King still looked on him with "coldness" it was on account of his half-measures when the Bill was being passed for the resumption of the Irish lands granted to William's Dutchmen. His party was for the resumption, and he personally favoured it. When the King's friends in the Lords tried to destroy the Bill by amendments he opposed them, but at length refused to join in the violence of his party and abstained from voting. Neither had he voted when it was resolved, but with a protest, that the Dutch Guards should be exempted from the disbandments. In the event, Marlborough was perplexed, with friends and acquaintances unreasonably jealous and the King angry. His wife, on her part,

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had lately taken the first step towards his last fall by admitting Abigail Hill, afterwards Mrs. Masham, to the Princess Anne's household. Abigail's mother was one of the twenty-two children of Lady Marlborough's grandfather, Sir John Jennings. Nevertheless, when she first heard of Mrs. Hill, and that she was in want, some time after 1683, she gave her money, and afterwards she gave more money. When Mrs. Hill died she had Abigail, the daughter, to live with her at St. Albans, and treated her as a sister. Now, in 1698, she introduced Abigail to Anne as bedchamber woman. A younger sister became "laundress to the Duke of Gloucester's family" (he was nine in 1698). The eldest brother, "honest Jack Hill" became his groom of the bedchamber, aide-de-camp to Marlborough, colonel, general, and a "brother" of Swift's society or Club.

Lady Marlborough, having now a family of four daughters and two sons, wanted a deputy with the Princess Anne. Her duties gave her no satisfaction. Her affection for the Princess could be satisfied by a less constant intercourse: she could hardly have been expected never to be impatient of a woman so much her inferior in talent and character and for so long under her thumb. Whatever changes there are in the world, said Anne to her in 1686, if only she would not forsake her she would be happy. Anne was her "dear adored Mrs. Morley." Anne was so entirely hers that if she might have all the world given her she could not be happy but in her love; and she would say that, to her last moment, "Your dear unfortunate faithful Morley will be most passionately and tenderly yours." When she gave the Countess an annuity of £1,000 she begged

her not to thank her for what was so little compared with her deserts. She would never get rid of her for the sake of £20,000 to please anyone ; she was certain, at the time, that is in 1689, that she was the cause of the Marlboroughs' misfortunes.

Lady Marlborough wished to retain her influence and authority with Anne and to have more time to herself and her children. She thought a relative like Abigail Hill, who owed everything to her, would represent her faithfully. But Abigail was quiet and supple, with the additional advantage of a stupid appearance. She never bullied the Princess or told her what she thought of her. She did not let people know that she thought them all knaves or fools. Whatever she lacked in wit or ambition was made up for by Robert Harley, her cousin, as Lady Marlborough was, but never her benefactor. At first, no doubt, she kept her cousin's memory sweet with Anne, while at the same time the Princess had the benefit of a mild, submissive attendant after that unruly government of twenty years.

Marlborough did not foresee anything, and if he had he would either have said nothing or have been overruled. He, no doubt, was counting on Anne. That she or her son, the Duke of Gloucester, or both, would survive William was very likely. He was strong enough, therefore, to promote and apparently to bring about the success of Prince George's claim for the liquidation of William's debt to him of £85,000. Parliament had to be asked for the money, and the debates where his foreign policy was criticised, offended the King, and the grant appeared to be a personal triumph over him by Prince George. After this Anne

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became "more, if possible, than ever her dear, dear Mrs. Freeman's." This was at the end of 1699. In August of the next year the Duke of Gloucester died: Sophia, the Electress Dowager of Hanover, Elizabeth of Bohemia's daughter, James I's grand-daughter, became heir to the throne after Anne.

More important to Marlborough and the world was the death of Charles II of Spain in the November of this year. He left no children, and his two sisters had renounced their claims on marrying Louis XIV of France and the Emperor Leopold I. But Leopold's mother was his wife's aunt, and therefore the next in succession to the crown of Spain, she being brotherless and sisterless. And she had not renounced her rights when she married the Emperor Ferdinand. As she was dead her son Leopold's children, by a second marriage, were not debarred from accepting the Spanish crown, unless one became Emperor. Charles, therefore, Leopold's second son, was, if agreements are worth anything, the rightful heir. But Louis XIV had married the elder sister of the deceased Charles II, Maria Theresa, and though he did not wish his son the Dauphin to lay a claim, he was willing that the Dauphin's second son should; and King Charles II had, in fact, left the crown to that prince, Philip of Anjou, by his will. The Archduke Charles, Leopold's second son, was the candidate agreed upon by England, France and Holland, in a secret treaty of partition—secret from the Emperor. Charles was to have Spain, the Spanish Netherlands, and the Indies; the Dauphin the Spanish provinces in north Italy; England and Holland gained commercial rights in America and the Indies.

Neither Whig nor Tory

But the treaty including the Emperor in 1701 gave to Charles what had formerly been given to France. The Spaniards rejected the treaty. They acclaimed the Duke of Anjou as Philip V. Henceforward, said Louis XIV, with his grandson on the way to Madrid, the Pyrenees do not exist. On his other borders he or his grandson were to have the Spanish Netherlands, or, roughly speaking, what became Belgium. That is to say, nothing lay between Holland and France except land which was now apparently French territory. Holland would next be eaten up. England would then face on the east nothing but hostile shores, instead of the shores of two or three countries at enmity with one another and never all at enmity with England.

William III saw more clearly than any other King would have, the danger of these changes. For he personally was threatened first in Holland, next in England. Already the Dutch had an agreement to occupy certain of the forts of Brabant and Flanders at their own expense, but in the name of Spain, rather than let them be handed over to France in exchange for lands on the Spanish border. Now these forts Louis XIV proceeded to attack. He had a sort of right, because he acted on behalf of the Prince, his grandson, who was actually King of Spain.

At first William asked his Tory Parliament for support in vain. The Tory policy was the traditional Stuart policy, the policy of Charles II and James II, which was content with the sea power and regarded Holland as the enemy, rather than France. William, as a usurper, and as a continental politician and hereditary enemy of France, could not have expected the support of

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Tories. Harley was the Tory Speaker—Harley, who, in 1697, had moved the resolution that all forces that had been raised since 1680 should be disbanded—who successfully moved the resolution, a year later, that the standing army should be fixed at 7,000, and all to be British subjects, a provision to exclude the Dutch. At first the Tories compelled him to acknowledge Philip V as Holland had done for the time being. They would have no war on the question of the succession to the Spanish crown to save the Dutch. They were willing to fulfil the terms of the treaty of 1667 with the Dutch—to send ten thousand men and twenty ships of war—but “Damn the Dutch,” people said, as people were asked to say “To Hell with Servia” in July, 1914.

William had to involve them gradually “without their perceiving it.” By the occupation of the Spanish border fortresses by the French, and the insinuation that the Tories would not fight against the French because they were Jacobites, popular feeling was roused. The Tories found time to impeach four Whig Lords for their share in the Partition treaty, on the ground that it conceded too much to Louis. Though the Lords acquitted them, popular feeling expressed itself in petitions, in accusations against the Tories that they were accepting French-Jacobite-Catholic gold. Then Parliament bethought itself of that word “Liberty.” Supplies were voted and a resolution was passed to help the allies to maintain “the liberty of Europe.” And Marlborough was naturally for this resolution. The surprising thing is that he had been in the minority which was against acquitting the four Whig Lords. Why he did so



Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford
After Kneller

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is hard to say. It can hardly have been as a Tory. For he knew that the reduction of the army by the Tories had been responsible for the weakness which caused the concessions to Louis. It is about as likely that it was done to oblige James, for he was still keeping up that conversation or James would not let it drop. In any case, he lost nothing by this vote.

The death of the Duke of Gloucester, however, caused some trouble in Marlborough's mind. If Anne should die before William, it was very far from certain that the Electress Sophia would be comfortably wafted over into the throne on William's death. The Tories and ordinary loyalists who had accepted William at the Revolution with misgiving could not as easily accept such another break in hereditary succession, with James II and his legitimate son still alive and comparatively inoffensive over the water. Anne herself was troubled. She wished to be Queen, but preference for James absent to William present had inclined her to reconsider the question of the legitimacy of her father's son. On the other hand she was strong, if in anything, in her Protestantism: conscience forbade her to favour Catholics, even her father and her brother. When the Duke of Gloucester, her son, died, she sent her father the news. When William's health began noticeably to fail she wrote to her father to ask for his permission to accept the crown as next heir, but also declared herself ready to surrender it if it could be arranged. James hung a curse over her that was to fall if she took the crown while he or his son yet lived.

William knew the danger both to England and Holland of a disputed succession. He wished the

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house of Hanover, as a Protestant family, to succeed him. But, knowing that Anne and the Tories disliked them, he pretended to have thoughts of favouring James' son, the Old Pretender, as successor. He "instigated or suffered" his friends in Parliament to petition that he should marry again in the hope of providing an heir, though there was good reason not to expect a legitimate child from a wife or mistress of William—and he had had both—and no reason why a large English party should adopt as heir a son of William unless the mother was of the English royal house. It was something of a threat to Anne. Yet Anne hardly needed to be threatened into an agreeable attitude. She wished to be Queen, and the Marlboroughs wished her to be Queen, particularly if they could be "there to see." For five and twenty years they had been attached to her fortunes with little profit, and for long with little hope. Marlborough was fifty in 1700. He had been a dashing young officer of incalculable promise. At long intervals he had done masterly small things that led to nothing. Something inexpressible he had in him, but William, out of suspicion or jealousy, never gave him a chance. Under Anne—he would be under nobody unless it was Lady Marlborough. And in June, 1701, Parliament passed the Act of Settlement. Anne was William's heir, and after her the Electress Sophia came, and then her heirs for ever, so long as they were Protestant.

William foresaw that the reign of Anne meant the rule of the Marlboroughs, and that her reign was very near. His own feeling towards the Earl may have changed; certainly his knowledge of the Earl's abilities had increased; and, in any

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case, he had to accept the inevitable. Marlborough was without rival. There were lawyers like Somers, and financiers like Godolphin, intriguers like Sunderland; but William's reign scarcely favoured statesmen more than Charles's or James'. Among soldiers, there was only the Duke of Ormond, who was superior to Marlborough so far as a Duke is superior to an Earl. Marlborough alone, if one man could do it, could represent England in the coming European war. His position with Anne made it a necessity that he should be tried first in the highest position. In June, 1701, the month of the Act of Settlement, Marlborough became Commander-in-Chief of the English forces in the Netherlands. In July he became Ambassador-Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the States of Holland, and proceeded to the Hague with William.

His business was to renew the Grand Alliance between the Empire, England and the States General of Holland. All were fearful or jealous of France. The difficulty was to persuade each party to be content with something less than millennial compromise and to fight for all. And in the meantime Louis XIV, with his troops in the barrier fortresses, and the governor of the Netherlands, the Elector of Bavaria, on his side, had begun to negotiate at the Hague and convinced the Dutch Minister, Heinsius, that he would make the necessary concessions. Both in the field and in the council Louis always had the advantage of dealing with an enemy that was not one but three. The Emperor wanted to make sure of Spain as well as the Netherlands. Holland was most anxious about the Netherlands, her barrier against France. England did not want Louis to absorb

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the Spanish power in the West Indies and the Mediterranean. But in September they came to an agreement; in October Marlborough, by compliments and cash, brought Sweden, that is to say Charles XII, to an agreement not to join France. When the right moment came, and things were grouped as he wished, Marlborough took on himself the power to conclude a convention with Sweden instantly, without consulting the Lords Justices in England. But the greater treaty he would not consent to conclude without Parliament, even with the King's advice, because he knew too well the temper of Parliament and the English tradition: he would "die rather than do so fatal a thing." He began a treaty also with the King of Prussia which, when concluded, brought 5,000 men to the army of the allies.

The alliance between England, Holland and the Empire was to keep Spain, the Netherlands, the Spanish provinces of Italy, and the Spanish Indies out of the hands of France. The Empire contributed 90,000 men, Holland 10,000, England 40,000 for the purpose. It was still uncertain how far England would agree to carry on the war energetically. The Tories, who were in power, could not, or would not, work in harmony with the King. But Marlborough also was a Tory, and his friend, Godolphin, was a Tory. He strongly resented Sunderland's private attempts to kindle William's affections for the Whigs. The Dutch war party used their influence to persuade William to dismiss the Tory ministers. Some of the Whigs were in Holland ready to pick up what might be about to drop. Marlborough induced Godolphin to write a letter, for the King's eyes, which might convince the King that the Tories intended to

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act well with him in the war. The King was not convinced ; his mind was made up against them. His hands had been strengthened on the day of the signing of the Grand Alliance by the death of James II. For Louis XIV acknowledged his son James as King of England. William was angry at the moment, but pleased in the event. No Jacobite effervescence took place. On the contrary, public feeling came strongly round to William. It was then that he decided to get rid of the Tories. Afraid lest Marlborough should again attempt to check him, as he had done by showing him Godolphin's letter, the King left him behind in Holland during the change. The news reached Marlborough as he was embarking—that Parliament had been dissolved, that Godolphin had retired. The new Parliament was not Whig ; the Tories were still strong enough to re-elect Marlborough's friend, Harley, as speaker ; but it was national in feeling, and responded favourably to the speech at the opening of the Session. William spoke of the insult offered by Louis in acknowledging the Pretender as James III. It was an affront to English religion and liberty. The aggression of Louis XIV, his breaking of the treaty of Ryswick, endangered Europe, England, religion, liberty and trade. He called upon them to lay aside the animosities which were dividing and weakening them. If there were still to be two parties, as one would maintain the Protestant religion and succession, the other could only represent a Popish prince and French government. Parliament approved the treaties made by Marlborough, and voted liberal supplies for carrying on the war with : 40,000 soldiers, of whom 18,000 were to be British,

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and 40,000 seamen for the navy. They passed also an Act of Attainder against the French King's nominee, James III, and an Act for Securing the Protestant Succession and abjuring the Pretender. Some very high Tories opposed these Bills—men like Lord Nottingham—and were naturally assumed or accused of favouring Popery and French government. Marlborough was none of these, and though dismayed at finding Lord Carlisle in his friend Godolphin's place, he had no difficulty in seeing where his advantage lay. He had to choose between Anne on the throne and James III over the water, and he chose Anne. Yet he knew well, as the Jacobite agents did with whom he still had conversation, that if the Hanoverians should ascend the throne very soon he could not hope for more from them than from William III at his accession. The Jacobites even thought it worth while to discuss a marriage between the Pretender and one of Marlborough's daughters. But Marlborough was now secure, powerful, and confident. He had the sweetness of a task before him and the bitterness of the glory. It was not for him to complain of Louis XIV's perfidy in breaking a treaty. He was a diplomatist and a soldier, and when treaties are broken it is fine weather for soldiers or diplomatists. He would have smiled when Mr. A., in *The Happy Land*, describes a treaty as "that useful instrument which enables the man of honour to promise, when taken at a disadvantage, that which (under happier circumstances) he has not the remotest intention of performing"—when Selene exclaims: "O horrible! And that is earthly morality"—when Mr. A. corrects her: "No, that's not earthly morality. That's earthly

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diplomacy.”* He would have understood the comment of a soldier, Lord Wolseley: “Yet we must not judge him (Louis XIV) too harshly for this breach of public faith, for powerful monarchs, and States with great national aspirations, rarely adhere to the terms of any treaty longer than it serves their purpose to do so.”

William died in March, 1702. Anne succeeded him without delay or difficulty. As to her brother, she told the Duchess she was not sure he was her brother, and that it was not practicable for him to come here without ruin to the religion and the country. Her husband, the Prince of Denmark, and Duke of Cumberland, she appointed Generalissimo and Lord High Admiral without army or fleet. Marlborough stood in no need of William's deathbed recommendation to Anne, as “the most proper in all her dominions to conduct her armies or preside in her councils, as being a man of a cool head and a warm heart fit to encounter the genius of France, and strangle her designs of swallowing Europe.”† To him she gave a Garter and the position of Captain-General of the English forces at home and abroad, and Master of the Ordnance. Lady Marlborough was made Groom of the Stole and Mistress of the Robes, with the management of the privy purse and the Rangership of Windsor Park, and tenancy of the great lodge there. For the Countess had long had a liking for that house, and Anne was pleased to give it to her for all her days, which she prayed God might be as many and as truly happy as this world can make them. The prayer seems to have been answered as

* “The Holy Land,” a burlesque version of “The Wicked World,” by F. Tomline and Gilbert à Beckett, 1873.

† “Churchill's Annals.”

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fully as possible, if not to the satisfaction of Anne. The family and friends of the Marlboroughs also found places. Lady Henrietta Godolphin and Lady Spencer (soon to be Lady Sunderland) became Ladies of the Bedchamber. Sunderland's pension was renewed. Godolphin returned to office as Lord High Treasurer. The Tories predominated, but William's policy was to be continued, and three weeks after Anne's accession Marlborough was at the Hague as Ambassador Extraordinary. But he was no more than Captain-General of the English forces : it was only after a vain attempt to secure for the Prince of Denmark the command of the Dutch, that he himself assumed the supreme position, with a salary of £10,000 a year. Even so he had to consult the civil deputies who followed the army into the field, and to consider the Dutch and other generals who had their independent commands. The Prussians, for example, were now besieging Kaiserwerth, a fortress belonging to the Electorate of Cologne, which was one of the few States of the Empire on the French side. The Emperor having acknowledged the King of Prussia's title, he took sides with the allies.

For a few weeks Marlborough returned to England. Parliament sanctioned his agreements with the Dutch, and war was formally declared by England, Holland and the Empire against France and Spain. He now left his wife with a heavy heart. From the ship off Margate he wrote telling her that he would have come back to her, but for shame. For a long time he searched the cliffs for her with a perspective glass. He took command of the principal army at Nimeguen on the Waal, at the Dutch frontier, where he had

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opposed to him sixty thousand French, under Marshal Boufflers. The Prussians had already taken Kaiserwerth, not far off on the Rhine, in spite of Tallard's attempt to relieve it. He had come for the purpose from the Upper Rhine. There his business was to keep the Margrave of Baden with a third army from entering Alsace. On the southern Dutch frontier, near the mouth of the Scheldt, lay a fourth army under Cohorn. Thus the allied forces, with the exception of the Margrave on the Rhine and Prince Eugene in Italy, were posted on the frontier of Holland. Between here and France was part of the territory in dispute, the Spanish Netherlands. The Emperor claimed it for the Archduke; but French garrisons occupied its fortresses from the opening of war. On this field chiefly Marlborough's battles were fought.

IX : THE BATTLEGROUND

THE Spanish Netherlands were what we call Belgium and Luxemburg, except that a large district about the Meuse, with Liege as its centre, belonged to the Empire. But the main battlefield does not include Luxemburg. It is, roughly speaking, the southern half of the land which is embraced by the curve of the Meuse and Sambre: the Demer bounds it on the north. It is the land, north of the Meuse and Sambre, watered by the Scheldt, the Demer, and their tributaries, which project southwards like the seven prongs of a rake. At the farthest point from the sea, it rises into low hills with woods; but for the most part it is sand dune, or land dyked and reclaimed below sea level, or sandy soil still lying to some extent waste and heathy. The waterways were good, the roads the best in Europe. A more convenient arena for the tedious game of war could not have been found.

It did not become the battlefield of Europe in the sixteenth century because it was convenient. This little country had no protecting boundaries; yet it lay between powerful countries which were frequently at war, France, the Empire, Holland, and England beyond the narrow seas. If Spain was at war with France or Holland, the Spanish Netherlands must suffer. If Spain was in alliance with France, or with Holland, in either case the middle land must suffer. It was, said James

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Howell, "the very cockpit of christendom, the school of arms and rendezvous of all adventurous spirits and cadets, which makes most nations beholden to them for soldiers." For him Brussels was a centre for those who would see a main of cocks: "If there be any leaguers afoot or armies in motion, it should be time well spent to see them." As there were no natural obstacles except river and flood, all towns were fortified, "and the manœuvres of contending forces were governed very greatly by the effort on one side to relieve these garrisons for active service in the field, and, on the other, to keep them confined within their walls as long as possible."* It became a tedious game, suited particularly to Kings and elderly generals. It was very bloody work, especially for the besiegers, but could be watched in safety by kings, ladies, and children. A battle was an accidental incivility in the course of a game. The genius of Marlborough was shown as much in the number of battles he brought about as the number he won.

Englishmen had been fighting in the Netherlands from the beginning of the Spanish wars. They went out as volunteers on the Dutch side, professional soldiers like Captain Thomas Morgan, gentlemen like Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and the "brave Lord Willoughby." In Cromwell's time they fought on the French and on the Spanish side. The Duke of York, afterwards James II, was with the Spanish at Dunkirk Dunes, commanding Irish, Scotch and English royalist soldiers. The other Thomas Morgan, Sir Thomas (son of Robert Morgan of Llanrhymany), led Cromwell's contingent that so pleased Turenne.

* "History of the British Army," by J. W. Fortescue. Vol. I.

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Turenne himself also had under him the French King's Scotch bodyguard and the Irish regiment of Dillon. Sir Thomas Morgan is the man to remember. He fought as a young man in the Netherlands, in England, Scotland and Wales, and then again went out to the Netherlands in 1657 with Sir John Reynolds to help the French. He fought at the battle of the Dunes, at the taking of Dunkirk, at Ypres, with his "immortal" six thousand. Turenne embraced him in admiration after his assault on Ypres. He was a little man, "short and peremptory," with a high Welsh voice like a eunuch, and used to smoke a pipe about three inches long. He and his men fought all over the sands and the dyked lands where the English lie now (1915). What was once a battlefield was likely to be so again. The Dutch Earl of Athlone, Ginkel, who disputed the command with Marlborough in his first campaign had a camp at Waterloo in one of William's wars; and again after Ramilies the English army marched from Genappes to a little below Waterloo and pitched tents there. The ground chosen by the French at Ramilies had already in an earlier campaign been rejected by a better general. "New Capell," a small chateau, was the Duke of Wirtemberg's quarters when he took troops, at William's command, from Dixmuyde to Fort le Knocque. Continually in Marlborough's letters he names the places everyone knows to-day. He posts sixteen hundred men to Armentières to protect the parties he was sending to terrorise the French within their borders. La Bassée was important as a central point in the long defensive French lines which were named after it. Mons was besieged again and again. The Allies took it immediately after the battle of

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Malplaquet. It was one of the fortresses entered by the French at the beginning of Marlborough's war. All in one night they took Ostend, Nieuport, Ath, Oudenarde, Mons, Charleroi, and Namur. The French were as strong there as at home with their all but impassable lines to fall back behind, and Marshal Schomberg used to say that to attack France in the Netherlands was like taking the bull by the horns. No wonder the Dutch took steps not to have their provinces handed over to France at the peace of Ryswick, and undertook to garrison its towns for Spain at their own expense. The wonder is that they were not garrisoned so as to prevent Brabant from becoming at once a French province, and once again a battlefield and cemetery for men and horses, with here and there an island of peace from which the Abbess sends the Duke a present of fruit to thank him and remind him that he can do what is worth thanks. England, too, was to discover her interest in this country. The Dutch showed great anxiety during the war as to their barriers against France. They would have liked Ostend also; but here Godolphin says emphatically that England "never will nor can admit" that Ostend should be theirs: it must be Spain's—Spain's under the Archduke Charles, not the Bourbon Philip—because Spain was impotent and could not save the cities and villages, the roads, the corn, and the heath, of the province from the armies either of friends or enemies.

X : THE ARMY

THE English Army, in 1702, was based upon the two bodies of English who fought on opposite sides, for French or for Spanish, at Dunkirk Dunes. The Duke of York's royalists became the First Foot Guards, afterwards the Grenadier Guards, at the Restoration. The victorious Cromwellian soldiers became the Coldstream Guards, so called because when General Monk marched from Scotland with them he made his last halt at the border town of Coldstream.* Charles II's bodyguard which returned with him to England became the Life Guards. The Scots in the French service, "a regiment of Scottish mercenaries renowned throughout Christendom, during four centuries past, for soldierly conduct, conspicuous bravery, and staunch fidelity,"† came to England as the Royal Scots : the age of the regiment, and the claim based on it for precedence, earned it the nickname of "Pontius Pilate's Guards." The Horse Guards or The Blues were a Cromwellian Cavalry regiment re-enlisted in 1661 by the Earl of Oxford. The foot regiments raised for Tangier in the same year afterwards had the name of the "Queen's," while the horse are now the First Royal Dragoons. The English in the Dutch service who came back when England declared war against

* "History of the British Standing Army," by Clifford Walton.

† *Ibid.*

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Holland in 1665, were called The Buffs from the colour of their facings. The Scots Greys date from 1681. The First to the Sixth Dragoon Guards were raised in James II's first year, together with nine regiments of foot, which included the Royal Fusiliers. In 1686 a Scottish regiment raised at the Restoration came south as the Scots Guards. For William III's wars in Ireland and the Netherlands many more regiments still existing were raised from time to time, numbered as they arrived, the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, Seventeenth of the Line, and so on, but named also after their Colonels—Leven's, Angus's, Wyndham's, Lumley's, Galway's, for example, to mention only a few from "Tristram Shandy."

Now suddenly for the new war old regiments had to be brought up to strength and new ones formed. Three pounds a piece levy money (two pounds of it to the man) was paid for recruits, three times the usual price. The Colonel was responsible, but Colonels give patents to Lieutenant-Colonels, and they to Lieutenants, and they again to Corporals. It was no easy task to get the numbers. The ordinary method was to attract men by a march with drums beating and an announcement of the ceremony beforehand. Farquhar, who himself served in Holland, opens his *Recruiting Officer* (1706) with a recruiting speech by Sergeant Kite. Says he: "If any gentlemen soldiers, or others, have a mind to serve his majesty and pull down the French King: if any prentices have severe masters, any children have undutiful parents: if any servants have too little wages, or any husband too much wife: let them repair to the noble Sergeant Kite at the sign of the Raven in that good town of Shrewsbury,

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and they shall receive present relief and entertainment. Gentlemen, I don't beat my drums here to ensnare or inveigle any man; for you must know, gentlemen, that I am a man of honour. Besides, I don't beat up for common soldiers; no, I want only grenadiers—grenadiers, gentlemen. Pray, gentlemen, observe this cap. This is the cap of honour; it dubs a man a gentleman in the drawing of a trigger; and he who has the good fortune to be born 6 feet high, was born to be a great man. (To Coster Pearmain) Sir, will you give me leave to try this cap upon your head?" And then Pearmain asks: "Is there no harm in it? Won't the cap list me?" There can be no doubt that putting on the cap and white plume would make anyone but a lawyer a grenadier at once. But recruiting by beat of drum is as honest and unexceptionable as any other form of trading and advertising, and the man who thus volunteered had £2 paid him as levy-money, or twice that of the man taken against his will.*

There were more disagreeable methods. When an Act of Parliament (1694) insists upon 3,000 men enlisting in Scotland and the counties and boroughs have to contribute in proportion, the chances are that someone goes against his will. By another Act (7 and 8 William III) a thousand men every year were to be sent in from Scotland. A sheriff had the power to seize men and choose among them by throwing dice, so long as they were idle, loose and vagabond men without lawful calling or visible means of subsistence and without families, or young able-bodied men without families who earn their living by daily wages or are hired for a term, but not menial or domestic servants.

* Act of 1704 for recruiting.

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After 1702 debtors owing not more than £100 could escape prison, and criminals the scaffold, if they were willing to enter the army. Or an insolvent debtor would be set free if he could procure a recruit. After 1703 anyone not a voter who had no lawful calling or visible means of subsistence might be snapped up by the Justices of the Peace and rewarded with £1 as levy-money ; but in 1704, between June 1st and October 15th, harvesters with certificates from parson and churchwarden of their parish were specially excepted, or they would all have been taken, or have been lost to the farmer by going into hiding, or have mulcted him with extravagant demands. Three pounds a man was payable to the parish for relieving the soldiers' poor relatives.

It was possible, too, for Army officers to obtain men from the naval press-gangs. Pressing for the navy being allowed, the pressers could, if they wished, send the men required over to the Netherlands. Officers needing recruits could also be supplied by crimps who contrived to get men to accept or seem to accept the shilling while they were drunk, or not looking, or under a threat. The " Authentic Memoirs relating to lives and adventures of the most eminent gamesters and sharpers from the Restoration of King Charles " (1744) gives an account of how one of these eminent men was taken, one Joseph Haynes. In his roving about London he became acquainted with persons as wickedly inclined as himself and one day, while he was in loose company at a bawdy-house in Whetstone's Park, there being a hot " impress " then through the town on account of the Dutch war, a gang of Tarpaulins took him along with them and put him aboard a smack. He proved no

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seaman and was discharged. But just as he landed an officer impressed him for the land service, and clapped him into the Tower till an opportunity came to send him to the English forces then under Monmouth in the Netherlands.

Whatever John Haynes was on the threshold of his career, not all the human beings so netted were the strong compact men, with lively vigorous eye, countrymen or mechanics used to toil, who made the best soldiers.* A high standard could not possibly be kept when large numbers were wanted in haste. A man had to be very sturdy or very stupid to enlist of his own accord unless he was a romantic, and was carried away by Sergeant Kite's variation of "Over the hills and far away:"

Our prentice Tom may now refuse
To wipe his scoundrel master's shoes ;
For now he's free to sing and play
Over the hills and far away.

We all shall lead more happy lives
By getting rid of brats and wives,
That scold and brawl both night and day—
Over the hills and far away.

" Hey, boys ! thus we soldiers live ; drink, sing, dance, play ! We live, as one should say—we live —'tis impossible to tell how we live. We are all princes. . . . "

Briefly, soldiers were not all princes, any more. The Stuarts had done a little to deceive them by giving them red coats or blue coats instead of Cromwell's leather ; and a Colonel raising a regiment might give them what colours he pleased. Lord Lisburne might give his Herefordshire

* " Pallas Armata," by Sir James Turner, 1683.

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men orange or dark buff facings to their blue coats ; Ingoldsby give his Staffordshire men red stockings. But these were no armour against rain, bullet, or lash. Marlborough's brother Charles Churchill said that his men in Ireland in 1690 were fit to conquer because they must do that or starve ; among five hundred men there were not a hundred pairs of shoes, no money to buy them, and no shoes there to be bought. Once upon a time things may have been better. Men, for example, who volunteered for a cause, for a good wage, or for adventure, under Elizabeth or Cromwell, created a higher standard for the soldier than could be kept later on when much larger numbers were required for who-knew-what, and paid less and that not often regularly or in full. The big, organised army fighting in a foreign country gave some satisfaction still to the adventurer, but chiefly to the coarsest and heaviest kind. Nor was the equipment and organisation complete. Bad weather, as in Ireland, killed thousands. It was in the power of the officers to let men have insufficient clothes, food, and pay ; and dishonest officers abounded. Perhaps money promised for special service was given on the spot. It is to be hoped, for example, that their crown a man reached the four hundred volunteer grenadiers at the siege of Bouchain who marched under fire and up to their middles in water four or five hundred yards. They lost but two killed and four or five wounded ; for the enemy fired but once before turning from so determined an advance.

But certain it is that men no longer paid premiums when enlisting as privates. Officers bought and sold commissions and were so paid that they and the contractors between them got a

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good deal of what should have gone to the soldier in clothing, food and pay. As they received so much a head for the men on their lists it was worth their while to give false returns and only bring the numbers up to strength at the last moment. And this was sometimes necessary to save the officer from drawing on his own purse for public expenses. "Enter him a grenadier by the name of Francis Kite, absent upon furlough," said Captain Plume to Sergeant Kite. He referred to the baby of a woman whom he was persuading the sergeant to make his sixth wife (not counting the dead). If a little boy could be an officer, a baby might pass muster as a grenadier at eight-pence a day. The abuse was attacked in a proclamation of 1689, announcing a commission of "several nobility and gentry" to enquire into the state of troops and companies and learn whether officers respecting more their own profit than the royal service, or the care and safety of the men, have presumed by false muster to defraud the Queen, and by detaining part of the monies due to the soldiers, have given occasion for disorders. Year by year (1702, 1703, 1704, etc.) the Act for punishing mutiny and desertion also provided against false musters, though an Act of 1709 authorised the use of fictitious names on muster rolls as an excuse for payments which as a matter of fact went to an officers' widows' fund.

It was a system, now, of ancient usage, founded on parsimony as well as on the dishonesty of captains. By it the standard which had been raised under the Commonwealth was rapidly lowered, and after a very few years of the Stuarts the King was compelled to resort to the press-gang. "The

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status of the soldier was lowered, and has never recovered to this day.”* Though the soldier was allowed two pounds of bread and cheese a day (but “God knows he gets not so much many times in four days”†), he had to be a man who was used to starvation or who could procure without payment. And there were places not even he could endure under the conditions prevailing, places far over the sea that were particularly not mentioned to the men destined for them, such as Jamaica and Newfoundland. Some officers left their men altogether, others took no care of them, Only old men or boys fit for nothing could be captured for the purpose, and some of these proved so bad on arrival that the officers discharged them in shame. The majority were the “oddest mortals ever sent out of the kingdom, being of all nations and languages and as many religions.” The unfit and discharged had to beg. And still Marlborough could not get enough men. In 1708 he was telling Walpole that it was more necessary than ever to think of a measure for raising recruits from the parishes and hundreds by Act of Parliament. What the recruit thought of it sounds by this time, if at all, only in the Somersetshire song beginning :

O Polly love, O Polly, the rout has now begun,
And I must march away at the beating of the drum.
Come dress yourself all in your best and come
along with me :
I'll take you to the cruel wars in High Germany.

Nor could every man have his Polly. But the

* J. W. Fortescue.

† “Pallas Armata.”

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suffering of the soldier waiting weeks in a transport for fine weather has been put on record.* They were at Tynemouth in March, 1708. The transports came to anchor and lay there till further orders. The men lying on the bare deck laboured under many "ill-conveniences" and many "bade adieu to the world." There was "continued destruction in the foretop; pox above board; plague between decks; hell in the forecastle; and the devil at the helm." Amongst all these plagues the worst was the short allowances, "so sparingly distributed that the purser was daily blest with the soldiers' prayers, being grown as fat as a whipping post. Then to land from this wooden and pinchgut world, to taste brandy and a whole allowance, was to be translated from Purgatory to Paradise."†

Sometimes men mutinied. The Royal Scots mutinied in 1689 because they had a foreigner put over them as colonel—Schomberg. They marched back from Ipswich instead of going on to their port. But they were overtaken, and laid down their arms, and in the end went as they were told to the Netherlands, where it was easier to desert. It was said by the Swiss that they would not fight unless paid regularly. But the common soldier had never heard of this; at least it was an officer who pointed out that if other nations were of their humour princes and states would have to agree better because their armies would seldom fight for them. The United Provinces were reputed to pay best, and mercenaries ran to them.

Both Swiss and ordinary men deserted. When his men deserted freely in June, 1705, Marlborough

* John Marshall Deane's Diary.

† John Marshall Deane's Journal.

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put it down to the very cold weather. While the armies of William III and Luxembourg sat opposite one another in bad weather in 1693, soldiers deserted freely from both sides. The forest between the armies tempted them. "The Swiss especially deserted from the French, and the Irish Roman Catholics from the Allies." Both commanders offered £10 and a free discharge to any soldiers bringing in a deserter.* In one year fifteen hundred English deserters alone lurked in the Spanish Netherlands. In 1709 there was a special fund for encouraging desertion from the French army. In 1695, crowds of deserters came to William, some of them Italians and Spaniards taken in a battle in Piedmont and unjustly forced into the French service.† But many men did not cross the sea before deserting. They deserted at once in order to re-enlist elsewhere and obtain a fresh bounty. Or they deserted on the march to the port of embarkation. A Highland regiment—in fact, the first Highland regiment—was no sooner ordered to Flanders than the men planned to escape to the mountains, but were prevented and had to go.‡ The newspapers of the day advertised continually for deserters. In many cases pardon was offered if they returned within a fixed time. Anyone bringing them back was paid a reward stated in the advertisement. One John Lindsay, a sergeant in Captain Alexander Cunningham's company in the Royal Regiment of foot deserted with the men whom he had "seduced" to follow him. Six men ran away together in the same year, 1688, from the Earl of Peterborough's late

* Clifford Walton.

† "Exact Account of Siege of Namur," 1695.

‡ Clifford Walton.

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regiment of Horse ; a tailor of Long Acre, named Richard Harford ; Israel Presseley, a butcher of Abingdon ; William Bishop, of Reading, a house painter ; Richard Mawer, simply a Lincolnshire man ; William Good, a Salisbury man ; Charles Brace, a Bedfordshire man. In the first year of her reign Anne proclaimed a royal pardon for the "great numbers" of seamen, marine, and land soldiers who had deserted. But if they did not return and were caught they should have no mercy and should suffer death. To help the capture, the advertiser described the missing men, their clothes, appearance, trade and residence or place of birth. Thus a fairly long series of common soldiers' portraits has been bequeathed to us. But for the grace of God these might have fought at Blenheim, for they were missing in April, May and June of that year, 1704 :

John Reading, of Market Deeping, in Lincolnshire, a young man six feet high, of well-coloured complexion and lank pale-coloured hair ;

And with him two other men of that country :

Richard Batteson, a sort of a leather-carrier from Stamford, a middle-aged man, about five feet high, with black hair and ruddy cheeks, burnt in the cheek according to law, and wearing a sad-coloured coat and black waistcoat ; and William Potts, who lived about Thorny in the Fens, a fair, fresh-coloured man about five feet high, in a double-breasted brown coat :

Also Francis Hardy, a corporal twenty-nine years old, five feet eleven inches high, a long-faced man in a yellowish bob-wig—a later advertisement adds he had a sanguine visage ;

Daniel Ward, from St. John's Street, West Smithfield, a tall raw-boned man of about

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thirty-two, pitted with the small pox, with a red nose and light brown hair ;

George Pollitor, a man of middle stature and well-set, about thirty-six years old, with dark brown hair ;

Joseph Williams, aged about forty, a tall, raw-boned man of palish complexion, often employed a-coal-heaving in the river ;

James Smith, a grenadier, aged about forty-two, a lusty, well-set man, with dark brown hair, wearing a red coat ;

George Wey, of Taunton Dean, in Somerset, a middle-sized man of about thirty, in a grey suit of clothes and a dark-brown wig ;

And Howell Lewis, from Beaumaris, in Anglesey, with a strong Welsh accent, who shows legerdemain or conjuring tricks, a middle-sized man full of pockholes, and wearing a frieze coat and a light brown wig.

The men who did not desert were further weeded out by various punishments short of death. There was, of course, the lash, which must be as old as Eden. The stripes ran to hundreds, and if the man with the lash did not lay on hard enough he was sometimes punished by the same or even twice the number of blows. A Guardsman who killed his colonel's horse for the hide was sentenced to 12,600 lashes, but being nearly killed by the first 1,800, Queen Anne remitted the rest. Some of the other punishments sound like inventions by men of the same type as the soldiers they were for. Running the gauntlet, for example, was some fun for those who did not run it, or it could have been no punishment to the one who did. Drums were beaten to drown his cries. Christian Davies, a woman who fought as

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a man for many years in the Netherlands, but was detected and became a camp-follower, says that her husband would have had to run the gauntlet after she had found him with another woman, but she intervened. Sentiment must have played a part here. For the wife had already cut off the woman's nose in her rage, and the Colonel had confined and reprimanded the husband. But Christian was a favourite in the regiment. Another punishment was used upon "his Dulcinea." They put her in a turning stool and whirled her round and round till she was sick, and then turned her out of town.* The wooden horse was another instrument such as simple, cruel men would invent. It was no more like a horse than a vaulting horse, but being for riding it was much less comfortable. "The back was formed of planks joined at a very acute angle." † On this an offender had to sit, with a token of his offence round his neck, and on his feet sometimes a gun or a heavy weight. Simpler still was "tying neck and heels." The offender sat down with his head bent, and one musket was laid across his neck and another introduced under his thighs and then the two drawn tight together with straps at each end. Thus, with his chin between his knees and blood gushing from his nose, mouth and ears, "many a worthy subject has been lost to the service or rendered incapable of maintaining himself when the exigencies of the State no longer required his duty." Yet a man who blasphemed—even an officer—might have his tongue bored with a red-hot iron.

When a regiment of men who had survived or

* Life of Mrs. Christian Davies, commonly known as Mother Ross, by herself, 1740.

† Clifford Walton.

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avoided such punishment was disbanded, the troops of the district patrolled the roads to protect civilians. James's troops, marching to Sedgmoor committed more offences where they were billeted than the rebels did; for the rebels were not soldiers. The troops living at free quarters in Ireland in 1690, English, Irish, Danes and Germans,—but not the Dutch,—being unpaid and unfed, did all that idle men can do in the way of robbery and violence. But, says Gascoigne :

I cannot blame them, I,
If they at bar have once held up their hand,
And smelt the smoke which might have made
them fry,
Or learn'd the leap out of their native land . . .

Talbot used to say that "if God Himself were a soldier he would pillage." Captain Shandy recalled that our armies swore terribly in Flanders, but nothing compared with the curse of Ernulphus, the bishop.

At certain times, by an old custom, Misrule was deliberately put in the seat of honour. There was a beat of drum, called the Long March, which was a sign for the men to club their firelocks and use every liberty and ribaldry of talk not only about one another but about their officers.*

Rules, of course, were made for individuals and for whole armies. Opposing armies in Flanders agreed as to the country from which they might levy contributions. Even so, things were supposed to be taken in a regular manner. Country Mayors and others complained to Marlborough, in 1706, that the army waggons had been cutting wheat

* Note to Journal of John Marshall Deane.

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and rye by the roadside, and he pointed out the rule that troops passing through had no right to take free quarters or the least thing from the peasants, except wood, forage for horses, and straw; they must not take waggons unless for the sick.* When men went into market in Flanders a sergeant had to accompany them to be answerable for their behaviour. Men gathering peas or beans might be hanged as marauders without trial. Neither officers nor men might hunt or kill game.†

But what if they were marching four or five leagues a day and stopped at a place where there was a scarcity of beer, but plenty of wine? This was the case when General Charles Churchill and the infantry were marching towards the Danube in the year of Blenheim. At Meckenheim they had (May 12th) "plenty of wine and Spa water." † That is all he says. Christian Davies outlines a little incident on the Meuse. She was one of a party escorting Marlborough, who was in a boat, and, stumbling on a pigsty, she "made bold with one." But a corporal of another regiment tried to take the pig away. They had words. He slashed at her with his sword and cut her little finger, and she in return struck out one of his eyes with the butt of a pistol. And it was on this voyage that Marlborough and his suite were captured by a French party. The rest held passports. Marlborough only escaped by calmly using one made out for his brother. Meantime Christian Davies would on no account lose that pig.§

During a siege, this woman used to go with

* Marlborough's Despatches.

† Richard Kane, "Camp Discipline."

‡ John Millar, "Journal of Marches, &c."

§ "Life of Mrs. Christian Davies."

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sword and grappling iron to deserted houses to drag out what the country people hid in the wells. The sword was to discover what was buried in the ground, a sleight she learned from Dutch soldiers in Ireland in King William's time. When Liege was taken the grenadiers who broke in left their horses to every tenth man and went to plunder. After Webb's success at Wynendael, when he beat a superior force menacing the allies coming from the coast to Lille, Christian Davies got a fine bay horse with silver-capped pistols and laced housings and pistol bags. The horse she sold to Colonel Hamilton, the pistols to Captain Brown, and the lace of the furniture excepting what she reserved to lace the knees of her husband's breeches, to a Jew at five livres the ounce. She describes what fell to her share when Marlborough ravaged Bavaria in 1704. They spared nothing. What they could not carry off they burnt or destroyed. They even broke the bells of churches into convenient pieces for taking away. Bell metal, clothes, velvet, a hundred Dutch caps, she stuffed into two bed ticks. She had also valuables, silver spoons, etc. All except these she sold to a Jew for four pistoles.

This was after 1703. In that year Marlborough attributes his lack of success to bad discipline, and his camps afterwards won the reputation of being quiet and well-governed, "the best academy in the world to teach a young gentleman wit and breeding"; a school where "poor soldiers that are (too many of them) the refuse and dregs of the nation, become tractable, civil, orderly, sensible and clean, and have an air and spirit above the vulgar."* It should, however, be noticed that

* Churchill's Annals, 1722.

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Marlborough is said not to have let any of the troops immediately under him go burning and ravaging in Bavaria.* Such days of plunder made up to the men for their scanty pay (little more than a labourer's) and their days of restraint. Then they would sing "Lilliburlero," as they had done on Hounslow Heath under James and through Flanders under William. If there was a veteran from Tangier present, or if the men of the Royals had brought it back with them, they would sing the Grenadiers' Rant :

Captain Hume is bound to sea,
Hey boys, ho boys,
Captain Hume is bound to sea,
Ho :
Captain Hume is bound to sea,
And his brave companie ;
Hey the brave Grenadiers,
Ho.

We'll drink no more Irish beer,
Hey boys, ho boys :
We'll drink no more Irish beer
Ho :
We'll drink no more Irish beer
For we're all bound to Tangier
Hey the brave Grenadiers
Ho.

We'll drink the Spanish wine
Hey boys, ho boys ;
We'll drink the Spanish wine
Ho :

* Robert Parker, 1746.

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We'll drink the Spanish wine,
And court their ladies fine,
Hey the brave Grenadiers
Ho *

Thirteen verses it has, and wit could soon double them to taste.

The Jew following the army to buy the pillage was a necessary parasite of the jackals. Still more necessary were the women and boys who followed in larger numbers, not the generals' wives in their coaches, but the soldiers' wives and partners, riding or walking beside the baggage. Those of the lower condition gave great help to their husbands, bought victuals, dressed the meat, brought in fuel, washed the clothes.† The married ones had the right to go out of camp to market, and Marlborough had to complain to Boufflers that sutlers, though provided with passports, had been pillaged and entirely ruined.‡ They attended their husbands in every situation. When her husband was in the "forlorn hope" or advance party at the siege of Ghent, Christian Davies spent the cold night out with him; they had three flasks of beer, one of brandy, and one of gin. According to their character the camp followers could make a good or a bad position for themselves in the camp. Christian Davies (if she or her amanuensis was not writing with a picaresque novel as model) was in a position to have horse play with the Colonel. After the battle of Oudenarde she went to Courtray to buy provisions and was coming back when Colonel

* A proper new ballad, entitled "The Grenadiers' Rant," 1681, quoted in Clifford Walton.

† Churchill's Annals, 1722.

‡ Marlborough's Despatches.

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Cholmondeley turned loose his black stone horse to trouble her mare. Four bottles of wine were broken in this rough courtship before Christian drove off the horse. She pursued the Colonel with stones. On the eve of the battle of Malplaquet she seems to make out that she was the only one in the army who had the craft to get some food and beer; for she describes herself dispensing them to officers and even to Lord Orkney. As to the "abominable commonwealth" of the unmarried women, they were lucky perhaps to be organised as they were when they followed Alva from Italy to the Low Countries, under their capitanesses and she-cornets, and divided according to their rank or the rank of those who might pay addresses to them and "buy repentance." Otherwise they were either "put away with ignominy" or at best had to conform to all the articles of war.* And yet war was their life, and when peace was made, like Ferdinand Count Fathom's mother, they prayed for war to bring them again the pleasures and emoluments of a Flanders campaign.† Some of the wives and women had children born out there, and on the march before Malplaquet, Christian Davies speaks of taking up on to her horse the infant child of one of her husband's mates, to save it from being lost in the deep clay. They plodded on till they came to a fallow ground, where they passed the night. It was dappled over with many heaps of dung and she says "he was a happy man who could get one to sleep on." Her husband, when she found him, was lying across another man fast asleep, so that he had to be awakened to eat.

With the help of such women the common

* "Pallas Armata." † Smollett's "Ferdinand Count Fathom."

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soldiers who did not want to desert had a much better time than documents prove. The pleasures of being alive and well on a fine day with no care recent or near at hand was theirs a thousand times, and the pleasure that comes of *esprit de corps*. At need they could act as bravely as if there were some other cause for bravery than that *esprit de corps*. They wore green boughs in their hats to distinguish them from the enemy—the enemy wore them, too, for a ruse, at Lille, for example, when they slipped through the English with gunpowder for the besieged*—and one with another they made a brave army. The “commendable custom of haranguing armies,”† was worn out before this time, but it was still possible to work up a more immediate ground for a quarrel by exchanging jeers with the enemy. The Covenanters in 1666 shouted “Episcopal Rogue” and “Saucy fellow” to the enemies’ general and muster-master when they came up near to try the ground before battle.‡ If an officer would run up to the palisade behind which the enemy were firing, the men would follow him and not fire until he struck the palisade with his sword, as at Blenheim. At the siege of Namur one July afternoon, the signal being given, the battalions advanced without taking notice of the enemy’s furious fire and shouts of “Come on, you English dogs”; the fusiliers carried their fascines to the very palisades, laid them down, and fired; the Grenadiers threw their grenades into the works; the main body following close after with arms shouldered did not fire a shot till they presented over the palisades.§ When the French were

* Christian Davies.

† “Pallas Armata.”

‡ *Ibid.*

§ “Exact Account of the Siege of Namur,” 1695.

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besieging the allies with Charles III in Barcelona in 1706, the English soldiers threw the enemy's grenades back to them. They fought in armour by lantern and candle in galleries thirty or forty feet underground at Tournay; they mined and countermined, and blew men into the air or were blown up, by hundreds at a time; they were suffocated by smoke, buried alive by falling earth, drowned by inundations; meeting unexpectedly sometimes these moles fought by mistake with friends. What with cannon, bombs, grenades, small shot, boiling pitch, tar, oil, brimstone and scalding water, the English Grenadiers had scarce six sound men in a company after the siege of Lille. There was no end to these sieges, any more than to Captain Shandy's on the lawn: "it was Landen, and Trerebach, and Santvliet, and Drusen, and Hagenau—and then it was Ostend and Menin, and Aeth, and Dendermond." And still they came on, these fellows with the gunpowder look and those lacking it who were led or pushed by them. At Mons in 1709 the Duke of Argyle shouted to the men who were shirking: "You see, brothers, I have no concealed armour—I am equally exposed with you; I require none to go where I refuse to venture. Remember, you fight for the liberties of Europe and the glory of your nation, which shall never suffer by my behaviour, and I hope the character of a Briton is as dear to every one of you."* With these words, or I should perhaps say with words to this effect, the counter-scarp was carried.

The lot of the wounded depended on luck. Christian Davies was carried off the field at Landen when she was merely grazed in the leg,

* Christian Davies.

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and this by special order of Lord Cholmondeley, who did not know then that the fellow was a woman. Corporal Trim, wounded in the same battle, lay till noon the next day before he was exchanged with some of the enemy's wounded. At the siege of Namur the wounded had meat and broth daily from the King's kitchen and tent ; * and there was a hospital at Liege erected for the purpose, " well furnished with doctors, surgeons, and nurses." When the citadel capitulated it was agreed that the besiegers should remove the wounded from the citadel to the town and there provide for them as in the Most Christian King's hospitals ; and already 1,430 had been left sick and wounded to the care of the allies on the garrison retiring into the citadel after the town capitulated. Prisoners must often have wished that they had fallen into the hands of God rather than of men. After Blenheim some of the prisoners were " naked as from the womb." † But, on the other hand, while they were being marched to Breda, they had what their conductors had for refreshment at a halt—that is to say, a pint of beer and a pennyworth of bread and cheese. ‡ Christian Davies and some other English, as well as Dutch prisoners, being taken to St. Germain's, they were noticed by King James II's Queen (Mary of Modena) and she caused the English to be lodged separately, to have clean straw every night, a pound of bread and a pint of wine a day, and five farthings a day for tobacco. Soldiers at home, sick, wounded, worn out, or aged, fared no better. A few got into Chelsea Hospital. A

* " Exact Account of the Siege of Namur."

† Christian Davies.

‡ *Ibid.*

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few had pensions or bonuses. Many begged or starved.

And after it all, no doubt, a sergeant would write home very much as Steele made Sergeant John Hall write from Mons after Malplaquet. They lost ten sergeants, six of them known to his correspondent. He himself was shot in the head, but hoped to recover. "I will not," he says, "pretend to give you an account of the battle, knowing you have a better in the prints. . . . We had but an indifferent breakfast; but the mounseers never had such a dinner in all their lives."* The same man on another occasion might have written as Sergeant Deane did at the end of the campaign before the campaign of Oudenarde and Lille. "Thus," he says, "after a very long, tiresome, troublesome, mischievous and strange, yet very successful, campaign we are safe arrived in garrison; for which we ought to return thanks to God for preserving us in the dangers we have from time to time been exposed unto; and endeavour to live as we ought to do, like men who carry our lives in our hands, not knowing how soon it may be our turn to be cut off as we have been eye-witnesses many brave fellows have been before us; that so we may expect still greater success the summer ensuing, to the prosperity of her Majesty and her three Kingdoms; and likewise her allies and generals wherever engaged; more especially his Highness, Prince of the Holy Empire, John Duke and Earl of Marlborough, our Captain General, and all under his command from the highest to the lowest: to which prayer God of his infinite mercy say Amen."†

* *Taller*, No. 87, Oct. 29, 1709.

† John Marshall Deane.



Marlborough
After Kneller

XI : COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

THE troops now facing Boufflers on the Dutch border knew little of success. Perhaps they had been "disciplined by defeat";* but there was a new spirit in them when Marlborough took command; the soldiers seemed to receive new life from the cheerfulness of the officers.† He assured the Dutch deputies that he would soon make the enemy march to such a distance that they could no longer be bad neighbours. He had 70,000 men to 40,000 French. But the deputies were timid. Just before Marlborough's arrival Boufflers had made a sudden attack on Nimeguen, which the Dutch had left ungarrisoned, and the Earl of Athlone had saved it by a very narrow margin. July passed before they could be persuaded, after communications with the Hague and discussions among the generals, to allow the army to quit the frontier. By a movement southward, crossing the Meuse at Grave, he drew the enemy after him on the right bank of the river, lest he should enter southern Brabant. Boufflers hastened in that direction and crossed the Meuse higher up at Venloo and Roermond. Marlborough, continuing south, hoped to cut across the French line of march and force them to an action. He hoped

* Bolingbroke, "On the Study of History."

† "A short Narrative of the Life and Actions of the Duke of Marlborough," 1711.

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that it would be unavoidable, as his troops were on an open heath and weaker by sixteen regiments of foot than they were to be shortly. The enemy were saved by the Dutch deputies. Passing the heaths beyond Bree towards Sonhoven the French could have been successfully attacked : the Duke of Berwick, who was with them, gave this as his opinion. Marlborough gave way but asked the deputies to ride out with him and see the enemy passing the heath. This they did, and most of the generals. The French, hurrying over in confusion, made all agree that a fair opportunity had been lost. Marlborough bore the disappointment with good temper,* and turned to the French fortresses on the Meuse. While he was approaching Venloo to cover the siege a new opportunity came. Boufflers, attempting to cut off a convoy of artillery travelling from Bois-le-duc, had to retreat, and in doing so exposed himself in confusion to the enemy. A cannonade was even begun, but the Dutch general, Opdam, would not attack and the French fell back to Beverloo. To Godolphin Marlborough showed his vexation : to the States-General he said nothing that could give trouble with Opdam. He took up a position at Asch to cover the sieges and protect communications with Maestricht, from which his bread came.

The siege of Venloo does not matter much now except for one incident, the taking of Fort St. Michael. Lord Cutts, " the Salamander," directed the assault. The walls had been breached, and Cutts ordered the men to storm it. If the enemy gave way precipitately the party were to jump into the works and follow, whatever the consequences.

* Robert Parker, 1746.

Commander-in-Chief

Fine orders, says one who was there,* "but as inconsiderate as they were, we as inconsiderately followed them." And other witnesses agree in their record and their opinion. They stormed the covered way and the ravelin, in spite of a mine exploding, climbed the breastwork with the help of the long grass which should have been cut, crossed a plank bridge that should have been withdrawn. "Madmen-like," they pursued the French and slaughtered them till Cutts stopped them. But for the accidents all must have been killed, drowned or taken. The men themselves were not less astonished than the army that looked on. Though Cutts never left the trenches until the fort was won, he has the credit of it. For his name was already "the Salamander." The town of Venloo surrendered in the end through a mistake. A breach had been made in the walls and the people were begging for a surrender when a volley of artillery was fired, which further terrified the townsmen and made the garrison expect an assault, so that they made up their minds and hung out the white flag. Yet the firing was merely an acknowledgment of a piece of good news for the allies, the taking of Landau by the Imperial army.

The army proceeded up the Meuse, taking the fortified towns of Roermond, Stevenswaert and Maesyck, by proceedings which Cohorn, the engineer in charge of the siege, a pedantic master of difficulties, made tiresome and vexatious to Marlborough. At last again he moved the army to attack Liege, the next hostile fortress up the Meuse. With an army weakened by a detachment for the Rhine, Boufflers lay at Tongres,

* Richard Kane.

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near the Meuse, on Marlborough's line of march to Liege. He had heard of this march and prepared to take a position under the walls. But Marlborough heard of his preparation, and arrived before him at the very point which he designed for his camp. Before he was aware of this, Boufflers almost stumbled upon his enemy : only the care of the Dutch deputies could extricate him. Liege opened its gates. The citadel, defended by one part of the garrison, held out till it was stormed ; the fort of Chartreuse, across the river, which was defended by the other, surrendered as soon as it was threatened. As it was now November, the campaign came to an end.

Marlborough had made an impression on the Deputies and on the Earl of Athlone. The other generals, even Athlone, "gave an extraordinary character of him."* Athlone, in particular, declared that the success of the campaign was all due to Marlborough, as he well knew, for he himself, the second in command, had opposed all his opinions and proposals. He had used Athlone so well that the command seemed to be equal between them.† He had not done what he wished to do, but at least the enemy had done nothing but vainly follow him, and when he reached the Hague he was loudly welcomed. This was, however, due partly to the escape he had on the way down the Meuse. His boat was surprised by the French, and he was the only one in it without a French passport. But an attendant happened to have an old pass for General Charles Churchill, and by showing this Marlborough got through. At the Hague they imagined him a prisoner till he arrived.

* Robert Parker.

† Burnet.

Commander-in-Chief

The other commanders for the allies had been less successful. The French, strengthened by the accession of the Elector of Bavaria, had taken Ulm. The Margrave of Baden was paralysed and then beaten by Villars at Friedlingen. In Italy, Eugene had avoided defeat by Vendome.

Marlborough, therefore, stood out among the generals of the year. The House of Commons described him as having "signally retrieved the ancient honour of this nation," the word "retrieved" being a Tory backhander at William III, which the Whigs in vain complained of. The Queen offered him a Dukedom, which he accepted after some hesitation as to whether he ought not to have "a better estate" first. £5,000 from the revenue of the Post Office was conferred on him by the Queen; but the Commons rejected, with very violent debates and a remonstrance, her proposal that the grant should be settled eternally, not during her life only, on him and his descendants. To make up for this scene she offered the Duchess £2,000 a year out of her privy purse. For some reason the Duchess refused; but in her disgrace nine years later she asked for £18,000 as if it had been a debt and received it. When Lady Anne Churchill, the third daughter, married the Earl of Bridgewater, Anne gave her £10,000 as a portion. In the House of Lords Marlborough won the gratitude of Anne by his support of a Bill giving the Prince of Denmark £100,000 a year and guaranteeing it to him after her death. His son-in-law, now Lord Sunderland, opposed it vigorously. The Duke also promoted a Tory Bill against Occasional Conformity, that is against persons who held offices by occasional conformity which were really only

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open to Church of England men. But this was amended by the Lords into a condition which caused the Commons to reject it. Supplies for the army and navy, subsidies for the foreign mercenaries, and an extra supply for 10,000 additional troops, were voted by Parliament.

This winter Marlborough lost his only son, the Marquis of Blandford. While he was at Cambridge, where he was an undergraduate, he was seized by small pox. "If this uneasiness which I now lie under should last long," wrote Marlborough during the illness, "I think I could not live." On the young man's death he begged in his will that unless he should thereafter be blessed with a son, the Queen would make his son-in-law, Godolphin, Earl of Marlborough. Some hopes he still had of a son, and when the Duchess fell ill in the middle of the next campaign he wrote: "For God's sake let me know exactly how you are; and if you think my being with you can do you any good, you shall quickly see you are dearer to me than fame, or whatever the world can say; for should you do otherwise than well, I were the unhappiest man living." "For God's sake" occurs often in his letters, along with many expressions of eagerness and impatience. He had a warm heart, said William III. No one could doubt his affectionateness or that of his daughter, Lady Sunderland, who ends a letter of condolence to him "with all passionate tenderness and duty."

XII : DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH

MARLBOROUGH was at the Hague again in March, and in the field in April, 1703, with Overkirk at the head of the Dutch instead of Athlone, who had died that winter. The plan was to penetrate farther into Brabant, as could safely be done now that the fortresses on the Meuse, up to Liege, were in the hands of the allies. Antwerp and Ostend might be taken, France invaded. But it was too bold a scheme for the Dutch Deputies. They feared the hostile garrisons of Cologne and Bonn upon the Rhine, and insisted on these being attacked first. April and half of May passed before Bonn was taken, part of the army under Marlborough covering the siege, part under Overkirk watching near Liege. The siege was concluded in haste and the garrison allowed to capitulate in order that the army might reinforce Overkirk. For the French army under Villeroi were planning an attack on Maestricht. They found Overkirk there before them and had to retire.

Marlborough was now free to carry out something like his original design, with the aid possibly of an English landing on the French coast. Cohorn was to besiege Ostend. Instead, he made a diversion into Flanders chiefly to levy contributions, said Marlborough, "which these people like but too well"; and Cohorn took the tenths of all the contribution. And to cover this movement,

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Marlborough had to watch the main French army, which he believed weaker than his—"which is very plainly the opinion of the French, since they always decamp when we come near them."

Cohorn having returned, was set, with two other Dutch generals, Spaar and Opdam, to take Antwerp, or at least the line by which it was covered. Marlborough was to keep the main army employed and off the scent until he could make a rapid movement and combine with the others to take Antwerp and then Ostend. But again "the lure of having a little contribution from the Pais de Waes" lured Cohorn and spoiled the design. Opdam was left unsupported at Echeren, and, though warned in time by Marlborough, stuck there till he was attacked both by Boufflers and the garrison of Antwerp, when he fled and left his army, as he supposed, to be cut off. It was, in fact, saved with heavy losses by the energy of Slangenberg, who commanded them, and the bravery of the Dutch. Marlborough was blamed for the disaster; Slangenberg even said that he had deliberately arranged it.

It was now July, and the intention was to attack the French "lines of the Scheldt" which formed a bow from Antwerp to Namur through Aerschot. "If you have a mind to have Antwerp," he wrote to the Pensionary Heinsius, "you must venture something for it." The deputies were timid still. They "gave no other reason for their proceeding than that which is a reason against every battle, the possibility of being beaten."* Marlborough was confident that he had a good chance, that success meant the capture of Antwerp and perhaps the destruction of the French army between its

* Bolingbroke.

Duke of Marlborough

lines and the river behind. But the Dutch generals also opposed him. Slangenberg violently accused him of having exposed Opdam's army. Cohorn and Slangenberg quarrelled till Cohorn went off angry. The Pensionary told Marlborough that he could do nothing himself on account of factions in Holland. At last, however, a move was made to attack the French. They were not caught outside their lines, as Marlborough hoped, on the north of Antwerp. The fosse, nine yards wide with nine feet of water in it, was too much for the other generals. There was nothing for it but to return to the Meuse and take Huy. "If we cannot bring the French to a battle," wrote Marlborough, "we shall not do anything worth being commended." Some hopes he had of a battle because his army would be weakened enough by the siege to tempt the French. He took Huy, and again proposed to attack the French lines near Ramilies. In vain: he besieged Limberg instead and took it. Guelder, which had been blockaded since the spring, also fell. And so the campaign ended in vain.

On the Rhine Villars won a victory at Hochstadt and formed the plan of attacking Vienna through Bavaria. The Margrave of Baden lay like a badger behind the lines at Stollhofen, which protected the Rhine frontier by fortifications beginning at Philipsburg and extending to the neighbourhood of Kehl and thence away to the Black Forest; and afterwards at Kempten. The Elector of Bavaria took Augsburg. Tallard took Landau back. In North Italy Vendome had progressed. Thus again Marlborough was, by comparison, triumphant.

His vexations had been very many. The Deputies and Dutch generals averted or spoiled all his

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plans. A new branch of the war had been added to his cares by the coming in of Portugal on the Allies' side. Small wonder that he had suffered from his constitutional headache, so that he was "almost mad" with it after some unreasonable opposition had heated his blood. From England he had bad political news. The Tories were remembering their dislike of a continental war. Lord Rochester was to have been got rid of by sending him as Viceroy to Ireland, but he preferred to resign. Lord Nottingham, Secretary of State, obstructed business, so that Marlborough wrote to Godolphin advising him "to be plain with him," for he did not think he would care to part with his secretaryship. Already they were accusing Marlborough of doing nothing, of protracting the war. The Whigs would naturally have supported his policy except that they were out of office and he and his old friends in office were Tories. They approached him or joined in the attacks. Marlborough himself talked of retiring, which had the effect, perhaps the desired one, of making the Queen say she would never forsake him or the Duchess or Godolphin: "we four must never part till death mows us down with an impartial hand." An opinion which he often expressed was that either party would be tyrants if left alone, and he said in a sentence of very characteristic unctiousness that "we are bound not to wish for anybody's death, but if Sir Edward Seymour should die, I am convinced it would be no great loss to the Queen nor the nation." On the other hand, when the Duchess spoke of getting rid of seven Tory ministers he was enough of a Tory to protest "before God" that he knew no men fit for their places. Harley, a man who still pleased Tories

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and some Whigs, pleased him best after Godolphin. The Queen also was not quick at seeing good in Whigs, because they were not such good churchmen. What Marlborough saw best was the necessity for continuing the war and the Dutch alliance. If this policy was changed the country would be ruined and in the hands of Lord Rochester. "May God preserve me and my dearest love from seeing this come to pass," says he to the Duchess, with an intensity now not easy to understand until the intensity habitual to Marlborough has become familiar. But it is quite plain that no change could much benefit the Marlboroughs; it was natural in them to dread a change that might upset what so many years had built up. A more absurd charge could not be framed than that he and Godolphin had designs against the succession of the house of Hanover, since if it availed anything he could not profit; yet the charge was made.

For Marlborough to return to this England from the comparative freedom of a campaign was something like going into exile. He arrived in November, 1703, in some doubt whether he would retire or his opponents tie his hands first. Two thousand of his men had been drafted out of his army, without consulting him, into the force for Portugal, which made the Dutch fear further reductions and threaten others on their side to correspond. At home Godolphin was beginning to be moved by the party which was against an offensive war and favoured only a defensive one. Again the ordeal of the Occasional Conformity Bill had to be gone through. The Tories were able to carry it through the Commons with a large majority, but the Lords stopped it. The Duchess

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of Marlborough took the Queen in hand, with the result that she permitted the Prince, her husband, to abstain from voting against it, as she would really have wished. The Duke himself was not to be persuaded, but signed the minority protest. His caution is plainly exhibited in a letter to the Queen, where he says that he will support the Protestant succession "by the help of Almighty God" to his last drop of blood, but that he must be careful not to please Rochester by voting against the bill; on the other hand, he will not ask anyone to vote for it. At the same time, he admits that he knows the Bill is lost unless he and Godolphin do speak for it. And thrown out it was. Nevertheless Marlborough was attacked, by those whom he was mollifying, for duplicity and for lukewarmness. Consolation came from the fact that Lord Nottingham was replaced by Harley as Secretary of State, while Henry St. John, afterwards Lord Bolingbroke, took office as Secretary of War; and both were young men who owed much to Marlborough; yet the Duchess also had been pressing him very hard to persuade him to take the Whig side—too hard, so that she said and wrote things that both wished to forget. For when he was at the Hague in May he told her that he had burnt the letter she had written from Harwich after their parting. At the same time, he put into his strong box the latest "dear, dear letter" that it might be found there when he was dead.

XIII : BLENHEIM

THERE was no one in England, unless perhaps Godolphin, to whom Marlborough would confide his plan for 1704. It was to attack the enemy, where they most threatened, on the Austrian border. Already, in 1703, they had planned a march on Vienna through the Tyrol, which had only failed because the Duke of Savoy changed over from the French side to the allies. But in 1704 they could not easily be stopped, since they had safe communications between the Rhine and the Danube, from combining in Bavaria and attacking Vienna from the west, while the Emperor was facing the Hungarian rebels on the other side. The Elector of Bavaria was at Ulm, on the Upper Danube, Tallard with the French army on the Upper Rhine. Villeroi commanded the principal French army in the Netherlands, where Marlborough and the chief attack was expected. Villars, who formed the scheme for marching on Vienna, was engaged in stamping out the religious insurrection in the Cevennes, which English loyalists like Marlborough were fanning.

Marlborough, the Dutch Pensionary Heinsius, and Prince Eugene, now come from North Italy to the middle Rhine, shared the secret which was to upset Villars' scheme though not to prevent him from explaining afterwards how the battle of Blenheim should have been won. Eugene's was the idea :

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it became something more by the approval and co-operation of Marlborough. The pretence was that Marlborough was to operate in the Moselle. The Dutch would not be overmuch alarmed by this. Then, having got well on his way south-eastward, he would not stop at the Moselle, but continue until he could join the Margrave of Baden and Prince Eugene and so strike Tallard and the Elector of Bavaria. Heinsius overcame the doubts of the Dutch. Their general Overkirk was left to keep Villeroy employed, which he could only do, since his force was much inferior, so long as Villeroy remained ignorant of Marlborough's plan and imagined him free to return and cope with any strong advance on Holland. Even to the Margrave of Baden he announced that he was coming to the Moselle. When he had already set out he had to combat the fears of Overkirk at the crossing of the Meuse by Villeroy, the fears of the Margrave that he was to be attacked at Stolfen.

At Bedburg, in Julich, Marlborough took command of the army of fifty thousand—a third of them British--which his brother, General Charles Churchill, had brought there. Then they marched south-east, he in front with the cavalry, Churchill following with the infantry. They were at Bonn by May 23rd, at Coblenz two days after. There, at Coblenz, he had to show that he was not for the Moselle, which runs there into the Rhine from the south, and his objective compelled him to cross the Rhine away from the Moselle. A little east of the right bank he continued parallel with the Rhine till he touched it at Cassel, opposite Mainz, where it bends. The Elector Palatine, before whom the cavalry were reviewed here,



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To face p. 134.

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praised their smartness: the officers, he said, seemed all to be dressed for the ball. Marlborough dined with the Elector and wrote a letter to the Duchess saying how much better pleased he would have been to be at St. Albans. Having turned that corner he again kept away from the river and marched south to the Neckar. Here he might still have been meaning to rejoin the Rhine and follow it up along the borders of Alsace. But he struck away into friendly Wurtemberg to cross the Neckar again, and he had reached there before he heard that Villeroy and Tallard were now marching to unite and force a crossing over the Rhine. The Margrave of Baden was to prevent the crossing if possible, while Marlborough marched on the Elector of Bavaria. The Elector had safely received provisions and reinforcements through the Black Forest, but the Margrave, though he could not prevent this, compelled him to retreat to the Danube. By feints, misinformation to his friends, and lies specially constructed for spies to carry to the enemy, Marlborough had now a good start, which luck and swiftness maintained.

At Mondelsheim, just beyond the second crossing of the Neckar, Eugene, the Margrave and Marlborough met on June 13. It was the first time Marlborough had seen Eugene, with his long face, sunken cheeks, mouth always open, black hair (he wore his own till it grew grey), a man who took a great deal of snuff, which he carried loose in his pocket. Eugene said he had never seen better horses, better clothes, finer belts and accoutrements. Above all, there was something which could not be had for money—a spirit in the looks of the men such as he had never seen in his life.

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“It is inspired by your presence,” said Marlborough.* The two men understood one another so as to make a friendship which never had anything to preserve or break it except work together, work apparently without jealousy or distrust. They wished now to act together on the Danube and to leave the Margrave on the Rhine. But the Margrave claimed to act in the chief field, and Eugene was left on the Rhine. Marlborough moved on in the rain to cross the hills between the Rhine and the Danube: the Margrave hastened on to rejoin his army, which was to unite with Marlborough’s above the Danube, near Ulm. On June 22nd the two armies became one at the appointed place. Churchill with the infantry and artillery arrived a little later. The whole army numbered perhaps 70,000. Marlborough and the Margrave took command of it on alternate days, the only arrangement which the Margrave—a great prince of the Empire—would tolerate. Neither apparently thought of attacking the enemy at once though they lay close by, on and across the Danube. They marched united towards Donauwörth, a city on the river where the Lech runs into it. If they took it they would enter Bavaria, with this good base behind them, and bring the Elector to terms by ravaging the country. He sent forward a detachment to save the city from a movement that was now obvious.

The defence of Donauwörth was an almost isolated hill called the Schellenberg, rising out of the low river land, but connected with the high land farther from the river by a neck of about the same height. This hill had to be mastered first by any one wishing to possess the city below it.

* Francis Hare’s “Conduct of the Duke of Marlborough,” 1712.

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The Bavarians were busily improving its old defences when Marlborough approached. Eight guns, 10,000 infantry and two regiments of cavalry lay there under Count d'Arco to hold it.

For some time England had been expecting a battle. From Frankfort had come news on June 29th that some action on the Danube was hourly expected ; that all the inhabitants of the Palatinate on that side of the Rhine, between 20 and 40 years of age, had been ordered to the river with arms and bread for eight days, to reinforce the regulars and prevent the French from crossing.*

Before dawn on July 2nd, Marlborough started. It was his day, not the Margrave's, and he intended to make it long and full. With a selected body of infantry and cavalry about equal to the defenders in number he marched to assault the Schellenberg. The main army was to follow as rapidly as it could. Late in the afternoon about 6,000 infantry began the assault, about a third of them British, the First Guards, the First Royals, the Welsh Fusiliers, and the Thirty-seventh. General Goor, a Dutchman, commanded the whole, Brigadier-General Ferguson the first line, Lord Mordaunt the "forlorn hope" of fifty grenadiers ahead of all. It was a very bloody action. The attack was checked by the men mistaking a natural trench for the ditch of the fortification, and down into this they flung their fascines, which were useless, and there they hesitated—fired on and charged with the bayonet—till the firmness of the Guards enabled them to renew their advance. Only ten of the Grenadiers' "forlorn hope," with Lord Mordaunt himself, escaped. The defence was so desperate and the

* *The Postman*, 29 vi, 1704.

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hand to hand slaughter so great that the recruits would have run away had not Lumley with his cavalry herded them back. But when this attack was still far from concluded and two thousand had already fallen, the main army arrived. Then it was seen that all of the enemy had concentrated to repel this first onset. The rest of the defences were all but deserted, and the Margrave easily broke in and swept away the enemy. They hurried, those that could, down to Donauwörth and over the Danube until the bridge fell. The city was set on fire, but most of it was saved for the use of the allies.

“It had pleased God, after a very obstinate defence,” said Marlborough, to give the Allies the victory. They had ruined the best of the Elector’s infantry, but at a heavy cost. General Goor, and many other officers, died. The English, on the left, which was their usual place in these early battles, endured the heat of the action and lost about a third, and a third of those killed. Marlborough seems to excuse the “extreme vigour” of the action only by its necessity.

In his camp at Dillingen the Elector burnt his magazines, such was his alarm. While his enemies entered Bavaria he could only wait at Augsburg for Tallard to join him from the Rhine. Marlborough was anxious about this even as he sent the news of the Schellenberg. But he relied on the assurance of Eugene that these reinforcements should not pass quietly through the Black Forest.

“We shall have to do our utmost to ruin his country,” wrote Marlborough. For the Elector would not come to terms. Marlborough would rather not have ravaged Bavaria. He took pleasure, as he said himself, in being easy when the service

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did not suffer by it. His "heart ached" when the Elector asked him to forward a letter to the Electress, and he thought of their separation. And the country was beautiful, and he knew it. War had not touched it for above sixty years, and he told the Duchess how the clean towns and villages would please her. He asked her to believe that his nature suffered when he saw so many fine places burnt, "and that must be burnt if the Elector did not hinder it."

On the fourth of August Tallard arrived at Augsburg, in time to save the Elector from giving up the French alliance. But he arrived with an army in bad condition, men feeble, horses sick. Moreover, only a few days later came Eugene suddenly to Hochstadt, west of Donauwörth, and on the north of the Danube. Eugene had left the Rhine and travelled with the same secrecy and deceit as Marlborough. He himself came over at once to see Marlborough on the south of the Danube at Schobenhäusen, and it was arranged that while these two acted together, the Margrave should go away to the siege of Ingolstadt and cease to trouble with his dignity and heavy style. But the two had still to join their forces, and that before the French and Bavarians could set upon Eugene's army, which was far weaker than theirs; and this must be done on the north bank of the river in order to preserve communications with Nordlingen and Nuremberg northward, the bases of supply for the allies. Eugene marched east along the Danube, Marlborough marched north up to it until the two armies faced over it and his own crossed at Merxheim and Donauwörth. The French marched parallel with Marlborough, and, crossing west of

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Donauwörth, were still a day's march behind on the north bank when this union took place. Eugene's wealth of cavalry in good condition gave the allies the superiority. It was Tuesday, the 12th of August.

The French took up a position behind the brook Nebel, with their right on the Danube, their left up at the edge of the woods on the higher land above the river. Here they stood in Marlborough's way should he wish to go back west up the Danube. In fact, unless he attacked them, all he could do was to go on to his base northward, since if he went south or east he must leave his communications exposed. That he should attack them, with their ninety guns to his sixty and perhaps fifty-four thousand men to his fifty-two, in their chosen position, seemed to them improbable, though he encamped by the Kessel, only five miles to the east. But it is what Marlborough did next day after watching their disposition from the church tower of Tapfheim. His method was to be swift. It was for Tallard two days after to tell him that the Elector meant "to have waited on him first." On August the 13th the drums beat the general at one in the morning, the assembly at half-past, the march at two. The word was given—"Anna."*

For some time the French imagined that Eugene and Marlborough were moving off to Nordlingen. For the morning was misty. But by nine o'clock cannonading had begun at long range, though the battle was delayed by the difficulty Eugene had in posting his troops on the right in the woods of Schwennenbach and on the land rising gently to the foot of the hills. Marlborough

* Royal United Service Institution Journal, vol. 42.

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had the left of the line—its extreme left, where the British were, facing the village of Blenheim across the Nebel in the angle between that brook and the Danube ; the main army of two lines of cavalry with two lines of infantry before and behind it, lying across the road which ran parallel with the river from Donauwörth to Ulm. The French and Bavarians across the Nebel were really still two armies, one under the Elector and Marsin on the left, opposite Eugene, and strongly occupying the village of Oberglauheim, the other under Tallard in Blenheim and stretching along up to the centre across the road. This centre was simply the point at which the right of the one touched the left of the other, and the line at this uncemented centre, about a mile of cornfields, consisted of cavalry, very slightly supported by foot. For a large proportion of Tallard's infantry, in which he was stronger, were in and about and behind Blenheim. That stockaded village, in fact, was made impregnable.

The moving lines of troops, distinguishable by their colours, the blocks ready posted, the general officers and aide-de-camps running to and fro over the three miles between the river and the hills made a magnificent scene in the bright, warm sun. So says Merode Westerloo, who fought there on the French side. The cannonade continued while Eugene finished his dispositions, and Marlborough, waiting for him, "ordered the chaplains to perform the usual service at the head of each regiment, and implore the favour of heaven ; he was observed to join with peculiar fervour in this solemn appeal to the giver of victory."* He said that he never prayed so much

* Coxe.

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as on this day. And he was cool. As he rode along the lines or cannon ball passed under his horse and struck up the earth over him, but without touching him or his spirit. In the battle he showed himself wherever his presence was needed, exposing himself without fear, giving orders coolly, and always calm and swift without haste.

At one Eugene was ready. Marlborough ordered Lord Cutts to advance against Blenheim with his four lines of foot, of which the first were some of those who had borne the worst at the Schellenberg, the Guards and the Welsh Fusiliers. The enemy reserved their fire until they were within thirty paces of the palisade. This line of British had orders not to fire until their leader, Brigadier Row, struck the palisade with his sword. Some of the officers exchanged sword thrusts between the pales.* Row himself fell mortally wounded at the palisade. A third of the men fell and were only saved in their retirement from a charge of French cavalry, by the coming up of the Hessians of the second line. They in turn had to be protected by Lumley's cavalry. With this second line Orkney got some position in the village and drove many of the enemy into the Danube, but had to retire, retaining only the avenues of the village, as Webb did a post on the Danube side which prevented them from coming out.† The defenders by this time were packed close in disorder behind their entrenchments; if they attempted to get over and out they were so confused that the platoons opposing them mowed them down.‡ Marlborough, in fact, ordered Cutts to give up the assault, but to preserve a hostile appearance,

* John Millner.

† Letter from Lord Orkney, "English Historical Review," vol. 19.

‡ Robert Parker.

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by firing into the village by platoons, and so keep the troops within from reinforcing other parts of the line.

The main army crossed the brook without opposition, but was charged by cavalry while reforming beyond. Eugene was driven back again, but General Churchill's infantry established themselves after a hustling from the cavalry. Before the majority of Marlborough's cavalry had formed across the brook, they were thrown into confusion by the enemy's, but saved in time by the Danish infantry and a reinforcement of cavalry swiftly sent for and as swiftly delivered by Eugene. The whole of Marlborough's force was now safe and in order close to the weak French centre. Tallard sent for reinforcements. His cavalry, he said himself, had done "very ill." But Marsin could not spare a man from the struggle with Eugene. There were good troops to spare behind Blenheim, but the message calling for them never arrived. Then Marlborough sent in the Prussian cavalry, and they scattered the enemy's horse and rode down and cut to pieces the infantry who stood their ground in square perfectly after the horse deserted them.* The pursuing squadrons cut down all: "for in all such close pursuits, 'tis very rare that any quarter is given."† Tallard himself, hastening to Blenheim to bring out the reserves that should have come, was taken prisoner.

Eugene profited at once by this decisive stroke. His opponents were now isolated: Marsin's right flank was exposed. Eugene, therefore, could actually afford—though he had been maintaining

* Letter from Lord Orkney, "English Historical Review."

† Robert Parker.

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a very uncertain struggle and his squadrons had all charged at least four times—to send away his remaining cavalry to help Marlborough's. Marsin and the Elector fell back, but in good order. Only the troops in the village of Blenheim stood where they had been posted. They were unbeaten and helpless. Their commander lay in the Danube drowned. All the afternoon they had held their own. Once Orkney got to the centre of the village, but the churchyard wall turned him and he was beaten out again. For long Orkney was ignorant what had happened on the right. Cutts was about to attack again, though on the other side the French were being confined now by the Scots Greys and Irish Dragoons, who charged into them when they tried to break out. They asked for a parley, and there was a brief truce, during which time Orkney had time to notice with astonishment that there were twenty battalions and twelve squadrons there.* At last General Churchill brought up his artillery close to the village. He told them that as it was seven o'clock he had no time to lose: they must lay down their arms or the attack would be renewed. So they laid down their arms. The regiment of Navarre burnt their colours, buried their muskets, the officers broke their swords to avoid having to give them up. Other officers were specially permitted by Marlborough himself to retain their swords. Altogether about 11,000 men without a wound surrendered. Already when victory was certain, Marlborough wrote a note to the Duchess on a slip of paper,† asking her to give his duty to the Queen and let

* Letter from Lord Orkney. But Fortescue says twenty-four battalions of infantry and four regiments of dragoons; Belloc says twenty-seven battalions.

† Letter from Lord Orkney.

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her know that her army had had a glorious victory, and that he had Tallard and two other generals in his coach. Slowly, by private letters, referring only to the fate of individuals, the news trickled in to Louis XIV, the news of the capitulation of the infantry in Blenheim village coming isolated and unintelligible.* Twelve thousand French and Bavarians lay dead and stripped; about the same number were captured; many more were wounded or missing. "All Germany" was lost to the French: Austria was saved from them and from the Hungarian rebels. And here began the series of reverses which upset the military prestige and quieted the ambition of France. By those seventeen hours in the saddle and the loss of 4,500 killed and 7,500 wounded, Marlborough had sealed the reputation made by his march in May and June to the Danube. He was pleased, and told the Duchess that no victory so great had been won within the memory of man. If, said he, they could have another such day as that Wednesday they might have such a peace as would let him enjoy the rest of his life with her. He had been ill for some days, and though he had "no time to be sick," yet he grew very lean and "ten years older" as autumn came on, and he feared consumption. Had he been in London he would have been in bed, he told Godolphin.

The Elector of Bavaria and Marsin went away through the Black Forest and joined Villars for their winter quarters near Strasburg. The garrison they left in Ulm surrendered at once. The plan for the rest of the season was to prepare for an invasion of France. Eugene picked up the troops he had left at Stolhofen and rejoined Marlborough at

* St. Simon.

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Philipsburg. Thence they went to besiege Landau, where presently Marlborough, tired of the operations, left Eugene, and himself took Treves and then set the Prince of Hesse to take Trarbach. He had a diplomatic visit to pay at Berlin before returning home—to arrange for a contingent of Prussians to fight in Savoy and to convince the king that in their absence he need not fear Charles XII. In December he reached England, anxious, angry with his political enemies, and inclined to say that were the affairs of the Queen and Europe in such a condition that “one might sleep quietly and safely in his own house” he would rather anybody but himself were at the head of the army.

The Lords and Commons voted addresses of congratulation, and also further supplies to be derived chiefly from the land tax. The trophies of Blenheim were carried from the Tower to Westminster Hall. Thirty-four out of one hundred and seventy-one standards taken at Blenheim fell to the English share. For many years they hung in St. Paul's, but in 1835 Canon Sydney Smith said that “not a rag, not a staff remained.”* As a permanent memorial of the victory, Parliament passed a Bill granting the manor of Woodstock and the hundred of Wootton to Marlborough for his eminent services to Queen and people. The Board of Works was ordered to build a palace on the estate, to be named after the victory at Blenheim. The Emperor had already made him a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, and congratulated him on having broken the pride of France and settled the affairs of Germany, “or rather, of all Europe.” People with pens made

* Royal United Service Institution Journal, vol. 42.

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another stir. Addison wrote the poem which likens Marlborough on the battlefield to an angel in a storm :

Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast ;
And, pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.

Prior wrote no better :

Secret and swift behold the Chief advance ;
Sees half the Empire joined, and friend to France :
The British general dooms the fight : his sword
Needful he draws : the Captains wait the word.
Anne and St. George, the charging hero cries :
Shrill echo from the neighbouring wood replies
Anne and St. George.—At that auspicious sign
The standards move ; the adverse armies join.
Of eight great hours, Time measures out the sands ;
And Europe's fate in doubtful balance stands :
The ninth, *Victoria* comes :—o'er Marlbrô's head
Confessed she sits : the hostile troops recede :—
Triumphs the Goddess, from her promise freed.

But Evelyn, a man with no gift for perverting facts, made a note of how he saw the Duke in February of that winter. It was long since Evelyn had seen him, and he expected to be forgotten. Nor had he ever liked the great man. But going in to see Godolphin, he saw the Duke there before him. And the Duke knew him at once and took him by the hand “ with extraordinary familiarity and civility, as formerly he used to do, without any alteration of his good nature.” He was very plainly dressed, but wore a “ most rich George in a Sardonyx ” set with diamonds.

XIV : BETWEEN WHIG AND TORY

WHILE Marlborough was marching to the Danube his political enemies did not leave him alone. The expedition was dangerous ; he was exceeding his powers ; the Dutch were being left exposed. They shook a very big stick at him, which was to descend if he did not succeed. If he gained a victory they lessened it, but news to the French advantage they could always believe. Even after Blenheim they said that the enemy's losses meant no more to Louis than a bucket of water out of a river. He was annoyed, because he was not a Parliament man accustomed to party abuse, and because he could not really see why he and Godolphin and the Queen should not rule quietly. Sometimes he said that he was little concerned with what any party thought, while in the same breath he talked of trying to leave a good name behind him in "countries where they have hardly any blessing but that of not knowing the detested names of Whig and Tory." The ideal position which he imagined was to have a Parliament where Tories and Whigs were about evenly balanced, so that the Queen might be able to "influence what might be for the common interest," that is for his interest and what he thought the common interest. Till this could be achieved the old difficulty remained. So many uncomfortable persons were Whigs, such as the Duchess and his son-in-law,

Between Whig and Tory

Lord Sunderland ; the Queen and his old associates were Tories. The Whig policy he liked but not the men ; the Tories he liked but not their measures. So he would exclaim that never would he meddle with any business but what belonged to the army. What he did think, however, was that the more Anne discountenanced " such as are not zealous to the common cause " the greater would be her glory ; and he allowed himself at last to be persuaded by the Duchess to agree that the Duke of Newcastle should supersede the Duke of Buckingham as Privy Seal. " I can refuse you nothing," he wrote ; and " I beg you will give me that quiet of mind, as to tell me you approve of my resolution, and then I am sure I shall keep it." Again, in this year of Blenheim, he protested that only his duty to the Queen would ever take him out of England again to expose himself to the malice of faction.

Once more he had to choose between principle and inclination over the Occasional Conformity Bill. At first the enemy had tried to run it through under the skirts of the Land Tax Bill, which nobody would wish to reject ; but they were foiled by the Whigs and moderate Tories, in what Marlborough called a great victory when he wrote to thank Harley for it. Later on, Marlborough and Godolphin voted against it in the Lords without speaking.

Nevertheless, they ruled. With the Whig junta alongside of them, Somers, Wharton, Halifax, Orford (formerly Admiral Russell), and Sunderland, they could never have ruled. These men were too strong and too uncongenial as a body and to some extent as individuals, to Marlborough. Younger Whigs like Robert Walpole were one by

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one admitted to office, but only necessity could make room for Lord Sunderland, for example, as Ambassador to Vienna after the Emperor Leopold's death in 1705. Such concessions were too little to please the Duchess of Marlborough, too great not to displease the Tories on the Duke's side, so that his friends gave him more uneasiness, he said, than his enemies, and he begged his wife not to use the expression "Tory friends," because he would have no friends but such as supported "the Queen and Government." But she exuded whiggery. She told the Queen that her Government could not be carried on by a part of the Tories, with the Whigs "disobliged," Whigs ready to "join with any people to torment you and those that are your true servants."

What the nature of the affection was which Marlborough still felt for the Duchess is hard to say. His affectionate expressions repeated in all his letters unfailingly were an old custom: he must address her at frequent intervals as "my dear soul whom I love above my life." She was a great strain and drain upon him, but he could not do without her; not so much that she was useful, as that she was a necessity. It was a relief perhaps to be away from her, yet he never contemplated being away except during a campaign. In the end it may be said that the ivy pulled the oak down, but also that the oak could not have stood up without the ivy. The two were never one, but they were inseparable. He was as necessary to her as she to him. Without him she could not have compelled Anne to retain her so long in a semblance of the old position. Few others pretended to love her. She terrified or she angered them, but the Duke she could bully without

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reprisals, with frequent successes, and with the triumph, which perhaps she never heard, of making him declare that a man must give up a great deal to live in peace with such a woman. She knew everything about him except this.

They had disputes—concerning the Queen, for example—and they had differences, but she had so much the upper hand that he sidled out in a manner suggesting a dread of what might happen by direct opposition, and then concluded by asking her to burn the letter if there was anything in it not fit to be seen, and to “ think kindly of one who loves you with all his heart.” Anne showed the same fear, but Anne got somebody to take the Duchess’s place. The Duke—a friendless man, unless the necessary Godolphin was a friend—had nobody. The most he could do was to beg her to let him have “ a little more quiet in England than I have been used to have.” Or he said that he would not have her constrain herself in anything—that he valued her quiet and happiness above all—even when he had the serious point to make, that she could not please her rival, Mrs. Masham, more than by staying away from the Queen. Once he expressed the opinion that after a certain interview between her and the Queen, when the Queen was harsh, she should be persuaded not to expose herself any more in speaking to Anne; on another occasion he begged her straight out “ to keep out of the way ” of Anne. He might almost be ironical when he warned her to be careful of her behaviour since she was in a country of wolves and tigers; when, having asked her very solemnly not to say angry things to or about their enemies so long as he continued in the service because she only roused

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them to attack him, he hoped that what he so earnestly desired for his own quiet might not be uneasy to her ; when, over and over again, he talked of being weary of business and professed that if he could be “so happy as to have the liberty of remaining quiet with her he should be at the height of his wishes.”

XV : 1705

MARLBOROUGH had already taken steps at the end of the last campaign towards an invasion of France in 1705. Bases were ready at Treves and Trarbach. If the Margrave of Baden were early enough they would lay siege to Saarlouis before the French took the field. Ninety thousand men he hoped for. But the Dutch were not ready, and their wish to keep half the troops on the Meuse was not overcome until the end of April. The Emperor, too, was feeling safe to devote himself to Hungary instead of helping to raise the allies' army to ninety thousand men ; and he sent Eugene to Italy to act against Vendome instead of sharing the command again with Marlborough. Moreover, the Margrave had discovered that he was less esteemed than his colleague, and only on an order from the new Emperor Joseph would he promise to come. In the end the wound he had got at the Schellenberg kept him at home, and his soldiers, such as they were, arrived without him. Thus when he began to move in June, Marlborough had an army less than half what he wished. He himself was out of sorts. The Dutch minister at the Hague made him long to get away " in hopes to find more quiet in the army." The sick and testy Margrave made him think again of the charms of being " a much privater man than he was," to escape other people's humours. And the season was late, the

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grass for the horses very short. And the man in charge of the stores during the winter had decamped after robbing them. The enemy were a far larger army under Villars, but acted on the defensive, which gave great heart to the men of the allies.

Villars took up a strong position near Sirreck. Marlborough could not attack him, and had to send a letter to ask him to believe that, if the Margrave had kept his word, he would not have avoided an action. Only politeness passed between the generals. Marlborough, for example, began by sending Villars some English liquors, Palma wine and cider, and expressing a hope that the campaign would be a fine one since he had such an opponent. Later there were requests for packets taken from prisoners to be restored and offers to perform the same courtesy in return. And yet Marlborough was so troubled by disappointments that a fortnight more of them would finish his life, he said ; he was weary of his life, and the Queen wrote specially to console him.

Things went ill in the Netherlands, where Villeroi, with sixty thousand men, took Huy and laid siege to Liege. Overkirk's army could not oppose him, and Marlborough had to give up the campaign on the Moselle to come to his relief. He marched in the night, without beat of drum, so that Villars did not know he had gone till he saw the camp empty. He hoped also to take Villeroi by surprise before Liege. But Villeroi fell back behind the fortified lines between Antwerp and Namur, and allowed Marlborough and Overkirk to recapture Huy. There was nothing then to be done except wait and keep Villeroi behind those lines unless he could be

attacked in them. They were supposed to be impregnable with their ditches, their inundations, their cannon and redoubts. But though the force behind outnumbered Marlborough's, it was distributed along a very long line and could only be slowly concentrated. Strong parties would lie at weaker, small at stronger, portions of the works. Marlborough decided to attack what appeared to be the most difficult point near Tirlemont after feinting at other more probable points. Overkirk, for instance, crossed the Mehaigne by his orders, and marched toward Bourdine and Namur, while he himself feinted in that direction at a weak place where a large army was promptly collected. Then in the night Overkirk led back his men and joined Marlborough. And so unexpected were these movements that though delayed, and though the point of attack was not reached till it was light, only a handful of the enemy received them and the troops crossed the river and the entrenchments without opposition or loss. The whole army lay safe on the enemy's side before the Marquis d'Allegre hurried up with nine thousand men and some artillery. Marlborough himself led the attack on this body with the cavalry. The enemy were repulsed, but his own squadron having to give ground, he was at one time surrounded and nearly killed ; for an officer came and struck at him with the sabre so hard, however, that when he missed his stroke he fell to the ground. Villeroi, with his main army, withdrew from the lines through Jodoigne and across the Dyle to Louvain, by a forced march, accelerated by hostile cavalry in the rear. The bridges by which they crossed the Dyle were broken down by the French and the flooded river temporarily stopped the attack.

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Marlborough was so far delighted. It was impossible for him to praise the troops too much, the men who had been with him at Blenheim never men fought better; their "kindness" transported him. His blood was so hot that he could scarcely hold the pen. The swift, inexpensive victory was celebrated by a Te Deum at St. Paul's in the Queen's presence.

When at last a crossing of the Dyle was possible the Dutch intervened. Bridges were made; the grenadiers, in fact, crossed; but the Dutch generals would not. Slangenberg exclaimed "For God's sake, my Lord Duke, don't," with wild gesticulations. The men on the other side had to return, which they did in safety, and the success was at an end. Marlborough showed his anger in a private letter to Heinsius. "Before God," he declared that but for Slangenberg by this day they could have prescribed what peace they liked to the French.* The army was laid up with a disease for which he saw no cure.† But in his despatches to Holland he omitted to mention the subject.

The next movement was up the Dyle, round the head waters of the river to Genappe, and to the edge of the forest of Soignies, near Waterloo and between the enemy and France. The enemy took a position behind the river Issche to cover Brussels. They were willing to fight. Marlborough approached them—so near that he was saluted with cannon-shot and remarked with a smile: "These gentlemen do not choose to have this spot too narrowly inspected." His army was delayed in coming up by Slangenberg putting

* "English Historical Review," 1896.

† Marlborough's Despatches.

his own baggage in the midst of the column. At last all was ready. Marlborough told the officers that he had made dispositions for an attack, that the enemy were embarrassed but could throw up entrenchments in the night, that now was the time to attack, and they could not draw back in honour. Slangenberg gave his opinion that the passage at Over-Issche was impracticable, but said he would obey. The Duke, pretending not to notice, flattered him with the proposal that he should direct the attack at Over-Issche. "Murder and massacre," said Slangenberg. He was offered English troops instead of Dutch, but said he did not understand English. Nor would he have Germans. The thing was impracticable. Then Marlborough himself proposed to lead the troops at the danger point. But the Deputies were still talking, and in the end they decided against attacking. Only Overkirk took his view. Even so Marlborough got three of their generals to go out and see the ground. The result was the same. He exclaimed bitterly that he was ten years older than he was four days ago. In the night the enemy strengthened their position. Deserters coming in revealed that they would have retired on Brussels if attacked.

The chance was lost. Marlborough complained this time to Holland, represented to their High Mightinesses that his authority now was much less than it had been in the last campaign. On the other hand, the Deputies complained that he had not given them notice of his marches. Slangenberg was removed, the Dutch minister in London apologised. But nothing more was done. The army retired to level the lines between the Demer and the Mehaigne, and Marlborough drank the

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Spa waters but without much hope. He was anxious for the future. To act offensively seemed almost impossible. His abortive success was likely to increase the difficulty of obtaining supplies for another year and must strengthen his enemies at home. And yet he had been most careful not to have a direct complaint made from home to the Dutch against the conduct of their generals, preferring the indirect working of opinion and private suggestion, and not wishing to spoil them, should another chance of battle come, which he thought shame would compel them to accept. He repeated the hint that he wished to retire. His spirit was broken, he said, and he must get away and live quietly or die. But the Queen herself wrote to say that she hoped that, for her country's and her friends' sake, he would banish his melancholy thoughts.

It is doubtful whether his talk of retirement was more than a threat to remind Anne and the Dutch that he could not be done without. For when he heard secretly that the French were proposing terms of peace to the Dutch he took a decided line with Heinsius that the English would have no peace unless Charles had Spain instead of the Bourbon Philip, and that the Duke of Savoy should be "our particular care."* But the French were, in fact, offering only Naples and Sicily to Charles, and the Duke of Savoy was only promised an indemnity in general terms. To Godolphin Marlborough wrote a letter saying that he hoped to be able to break the negotiation when he reached the Hague. He showed the same determination when confronted by those at home who stood in his way. To the Queen he sent the

* "English Historical Review," 1896.

simple advice that she should consult Godolphin as to what should be done, in order to carry on the war and oppose "the extravagances of these mad people."

The Spa waters or the troubles of the campaign reduced Marlborough to such leanness that he could not lie comfortable in bed. But he had still a round of diplomatic visits to pay after leaving the army at the end of October. The ministers at Vienna wished to see him to arrange for troops and money to save North Italy, and to complain of the republicanism of Lord Sunderland and the other English envoy, George Stepney (a diplomatist and a poet whose juvenilia once upon a time "made grey authors blush"): Lord Sunderland, who was anxious to see some justice done in Hungary, said that his coming was a necessity, and that if he came there was nothing in the power of the Court which he would not persuade them to. The King of Prussia wanted payment for his troops in Italy, or else the return of the men. But the Emperor could ill spare them, neither could the Dutch afford at once to pay their arrears according to promise. So, said Marlborough, he would endeavour that they should give the King "a great many good words." The Duke himself was an adept at good words. More than once, when the Dutch had resolved to oppose a plan of his, he came in and spoke in his bad French and overpowered them.*

On his way to Vienna he saw the dignified Margrave with the bad foot, and no doubt taking advantage of his success late in the campaign in Alsace, talked to him without betraying the least impatience or dislike. Yet he came away from the

* Voltaire's "Charles XII."

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interview without much confidence in what the Margrave would perform in the coming year. "I do not intend to oppose his project," says Marlborough, "but I cannot rely on what he says." On coming to Vienna he was reminded by a letter from Eugene of the various armies to be maintained by the Emperor and the great loans necessary. He promised a loan in the name of England and Holland, pledging himself, so that the bankers of Vienna made an immediate advance. There was a hitch some time later when the Imperial Minister had to write for the money or else a plain statement that it could not be granted. But Parliament did grant it. It was arranged also for Stepney to leave Vienna for the Hague. But when the Emperor complained of the Dutch, on account of their negotiations with France and backward payment, he soothed him and let him see that "his affairs would not allow of his quarrelling." By his intercession some good words were promised both to the King of Prussia and the Hungarians. And he personally received the Emperor's portrait, a diamond ring, and a compliment for "the conqueror of Blenheim," from Joseph himself. From the King of Prussia he obtained consent to the renewal of the treaty for sending troops to Italy and for himself a bediamonded sword. At the Court of Hanover he had to deal with the old Tory Electress and the Whig Elector. Anne was depending on him to set these people right "in their notions of things here," and, said she, "if they will be quiet I may be so too." She did not want them in England, nor did the Whig party. But he was able to inform them the Whigs were passing a Bill to naturalise the Elector and his family. So great was his success

that the Elector commanded him to assure the Queen that "he would never have any thoughts but what may be agreeable to hers." With the Dutch, whom he came to last in December, he got the spleen, and could have said more than he did to Godolphin. He knew that they would go on with the war, though not with the right vigour. They were in a distracted state, and proposed to send an Embassy to the Queen. And in the end they promised their share of the money for Spain and for Eugene's Italian army, and consented to let a further 10,000 troops go to Italy and to pay a third of the expense to England's two-thirds.

On arriving in England at the end of the year, Marlborough stepped into the usual tumult of congratulation and political difference. While he was trying to attack Villeroy on the Issche he received news of the Tory cry that the Church was in danger, and now it had just been decided by vote in the Commons that those who accused ministers of exposing the Church to danger (by not passing the Bill against people who held office but only went occasionally to church) were enemies to Her Majesty. It had been a Whig and Tory conflict. Somers, Halifax and Wharton all spoke against the pretence that the Church was in danger. Harley and a few "moderate Tories" were still on the same side, but their party had been in a minority in the Commons since the election in the spring of 1705, and St. John had said in July that though the moderates might cease to be Tories they could never become Whigs. The Whigs had now more claim than ever to offices in the Ministry. Godolphin and the Duchess of Marlborough approached the Queen to overcome her Tory

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scruples. The Queen applied directly to Marlborough; and at last Cowper took the place of a Tory as Lord Keeper, and a Whig Speaker was chosen. The Queen's speech reflected Marlborough's opinion that Europe had to be saved by England and Anne's resolution of carrying on the war. "If the French King continues master of the Spanish Monarchy," so ran the speech in one place, "the balance of power is destroyed, and he will engross the trade and wealth of the world." There were still two Kings in Spain, and Lord Peterborough's lightning operations and bluff gave the English candidate a semblance of a chance in 1705.

But the Tories wanted Marlborough's blood, and soon had another cry. The Protestant succession was in danger, they said. The Electress Sophia should be invited over so as to step straight into Anne's shoes when the time came. But Anne would not have the Hanoverians near her. Her ministers, therefore, had to oppose the suggestion and thus offend Sophia and give colour to the Tory charge. To counteract these bad effects a Bill was passed naturalising the Hanoverians. And this the Tories opposed, with so much rancour that one of them ventured to refer to Marlborough as "a noble lord without whose advice the Queen does nothing, who in the late reign was known to keep a constant correspondence with James at the Court of St. Germain's."

Under these attacks Marlborough either execrated the vile faction or reminded the Duchess that the best of men and women in all ages have been ill-used. But he came round to the opinion which Godolphin already held at home that the Whigs must be welcomed as well as accepted for

allies. With all his heart he agreed to “ live friendly with those that have shown so much friendship to you and service to the Queen.” Anne herself, too, was able to tell the Duchess that she was sensible of the services “ those people ” had done her. Marlborough and Godolphin and Sunderland and Harley and St. John and Halifax and Cowper dined together.

XVI : THE WONDERFUL YEAR

MARLBOROUGH left England in March, 1706, with some hope that he would serve in Italy instead of the Netherlands, and with authority to ask the Dutch to send a detachment to Italy or, if they refused, to go himself with the English troops. For he had reason to believe, since the Blenheim campaign, that the farther away he was from Dutch deputies and the Hague, the easier it was to do as he wished. Another campaign like the last or like that of 1703 he could not endure the thought of. The Emperor proposed another campaign on the Moselle, and undertook to see that the Margrave did his part, but he refused. Then the people to whom he had given good words in the past winter failed him : the King of Prussia, the Emperor, and the Dutch kept their differences as bright as ever. The Court of Hanover were so ill-disposed that not even a Garter would soothe them. Anne wrote them a stiff letter for Marlborough to deliver, but he took it upon him to withhold it, which she afterwards approved. Neither the Dutch nor the German princes wished their troops to go to Italy. Finally Villars began a campaign on the Rhine by reversing the Margrave's successes of the past year and capturing his magazines, which alarmed the Dutch and decided Marlborough to stay in the Netherlands. He joined the army near Tongres. "God knows," he said, he had a heavy heart and no

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prospect of doing anything considerable. But he was at any rate not to be questioned or interfered with by his Dutch subordinates.

Villeroi, with a French army of 62,000, lay behind the Dyle at Louvain.

Marlborough intended to move first for Namur, still without his Hanoverian troops, and with his Danes immoveable until paid. This tempted Villeroi out. Namur must be saved. The enemy was weak and might be beaten at once. So he marched south to Tirlemont, while the English, with the Dutch, and at last the Danes also, combined near Tongres, about 60,000 men in all. Marlborough advanced westward between the sources of the northward and southward flowing streams towards Tirlemont. On the comparatively high land about Ramillies the enemy blocked the way. Cadogan, riding in advance, discovered them in the morning fog of Sunday, May 23rd, quite suddenly. While it was still uncertain whether it was their main army, the whole of the allied army came up, and, the sun breaking out, revealed the two to one another.

The French were drawn up in a four-mile crescent, their left at L'autre Église, their right at Tavier, on the Mehaigne. The village of Ramillies marked their centre: behind it was a noticeable large tumulus, called the Tomb of Ottomond; from it to Tavier the country was open and gently undulating, a fine plain for cavalry; and there Villeroi had his best cavalry interlined with his best infantry. The left was protected by the marshy ground in the fork between the head waters of two streamlets, the Little Gheet and the Janche. Their artillery stood as usual in front and chiefly before the centre.

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They had outposts in the hedges about Franquinaise, in front of their left, and the villages, particularly Ramillies, were strongly held.

But Marlborough, coming up the slight ascent over the undulations, saw that the enemy's left was useless, because the marsh which lay in front of it protected it, but so completely that it must remain inactive or change its position. He therefore massed a good show of troops against that left, and then, under cover of a fall in the land, drew them nearly all off to his centre and left. His whole line was scarcely above two miles and a half in length, being straight. The enemy's four mile line lay in a crescent bowed inwards, and therefore obliging men who had to change their place to travel further than if it were straight.

Villeroi, seeing the English troops facing his left, expected to have most of the fighting there, and reinforced it accordingly. But the attack began upon the weakened centre and the right, while Marlborough's right had nothing to do until the end of the day. His left advanced through the skirmishers and snipers in the hedges of Franquinaise, to where the infantry massed in and before Tavier's opposed them. The fighting was even there, and lasted so long that Villeroi had time to bring back again some of the troops from his left as reinforcements. But the Danish hussars, getting between Tavier's and the river, cut some of these newcomers to pieces, and the infantry also, before the village, drove back their opponents until checked by the cavalry. Here the allied cavalry of the left charged the enemy's and broke them, but only their first line. They in turn were thrown into a confusion. To some extent they were relieved by the attack now made on

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Ramillies and the French centre. To complete their relief, Marlborough himself called up all the horse from the right and charged with it. He himself was unhorsed by a shot, but untouched. When he was remounting, Colonel Bingfield, the secretary, who held his stirrup, had his head carried off. Still more cavalry came up, and he led them in a charge that drove the French left far back to the tomb of Ottomond. Ramillies itself, its defence of artillery, its hedges, fences and buildings lined with troops, French and Irish, kept the allies busy for some time, fighting from garden to garden in smoke and dust, and not a bayonet left bright. When they got through the village they were checked by two fresh battalions of the enemy, and then knocked violently back by galloping cavalry. But again Marlborough appeared with his cavalry. They ran into the French on the flank, cut the infantry to pieces and drove off the cavalry. Thus the French right and centre was driven back and huddled in confusion near the tomb of Ottomond. There Villeroi tried to reform them as a new line, but with his impotent left as before. But now he had to contend with his own baggage waggons, which had been left behind his centre, and were now a terrible hindrance to his cavalry. And Marlborough was ready to launch a fresh attack. First of all the British troops from his right wing turned their opponents out of the village of Offuz in the marsh. The French cavalry tried to save the position, but the Scots Greys intervened. This was the beginning of the last great cavalry advance, and it swept the enemy away. The Danish hussars and the Scots Greys rode in amongst them continually. The Danes, said one who was there,

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would not halt when ordered, but drove on "Jehu-like," giving no quarter, while the English, more merciful, gave quarter to the *Regiment du Roy* when they laid down their arms at their horses' feet and begged for their lives.* The Spanish and Bavarian Horse Guards, even in the presence of the Elector of Bavaria, could do nothing but stand firm and be overwhelmed. And after this the enemy simply fled, with or without their arms, towards Louvain. The baggage and most of the cannon were abandoned. Four thousand of the French were killed, four thousand wounded or taken prisoners; seven thousand deserted. The infantry continued to pursue through the night for fifteen miles. Lord Orkney's squadrons did not turn back until they had seen the fugitives over the Dyle at Louvain. Finally the French left Louvain and Brussels to their fate and took up a position behind the Scheldt. Their wounded were cared for under the orders of Marlborough, who "always showed the utmost attention to his prisoners and set the example of that humanity which has since soothed the horrors and calamities of war." † The cost to the allies was 1,100 killed and 2,500 wounded, and a headache for days to Marlborough.

Nothing could now stop Marlborough rejoicing in the freedom from councils of war and in the belief that the "blessing of God" was with his army. Louvain, Brussels, Malines surrendered at once. The French could have opposed him at Ghent, but retired again, leaving him to take Ghent instead of having to cross the Scheldt and cut them out of their lines. The city welcomed the

* Quoted by Gerald B. Hertz in "United Service Magazine," 1911.

† Duclos, quoted in Coxe

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conqueror. "It really looks more like a dream than truth," he said himself. Everywhere the people declared for King Charles. Bruges surrendered. Oudenarde, of its own accord, got rid of its French garrison. Antwerp invited a siege, but presently the Walloon half of the garrison opened negotiations with Marlborough, and he was admitted on condition that the French half was allowed to retire to the army. Godolphin hoped for Dunkirk. For, said he, we ought to get what we could now, since it was unlikely that anything much would be got by a peace. But first Ostend and Nieuport and Ypres were to be taken. Ostend was very strong, but the garrison was partly native and the attack was fierce. Warships bombarded it from the sea; by land it was bombarded from batteries constructed on the glacis itself; and after a short siege it capitulated. Menin was captured by assault before the end of August.

As Marlborough had foreseen, the French had to withdraw troops from France, and thus gave Eugene the success which also he had foreseen, saving Turin and driving the enemy almost from Italy. These new troops, led by Vendome, made, with those beaten at Ramillies and others from the Rhine, an army of about 90,000, which looked threatening, but did not save Menin. Thinking Lille would be attacked next, they fell back between the Deule and Lys to cover it. But the allies turned next to Dendermond, and "by the hand of God which gave us seven weeks without any rain," they took it, though Louis XIV said they needed an army of ducks. Ath also fell to Overkirk. He and Marlborough then united again midway between Ath and Mons, and Vendome talked of

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“paying them a visit,” but never did. His men were not eager to encounter Marlborough, at whose name they would take off their hats. Mons might now have been taken by the allies, which would have given them an advantage at the opening of the next campaign. The Dutch, however, failed to supply the stores, and the Duke left the army to Overkirk while he went negotiating and receiving honours. Brussels treated him as it used to treat Dukes of Burgundy. The people of Amsterdam crowded the streets and windows, shouting “Long live de Herzog von Marlborough.”*

One of the effects of Ramillies, which gave “Louvain, Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges and Ostend, with the greatest part of Brabant and Flanders” to Charles III, was to bring Marlborough an offer of the government of the Netherlands. The Emperor hoped thus to save the country from the Dutch, as well as to gain a powerful administrator. Marlborough took steps to find what the Queen thought, and how his friends in Holland liked it. From the Queen and the ministers he learnt that he should do as he thought best for her service “and the good of the common cause.” But the Dutch were so unkind as to think the Emperor had done this to keep them out. He, in reply, said that naturally he would take no steps without consulting them, whose friendship he preferred before his own interest. To Godolphin he said that he willingly gave up the £60,000 a year because he thought it best, yet that he hoped this “compliance” would give him weight with them. The Dutch, on the other hand, busied themselves to get control of the Government, so

* John Hill Burton's “Reign of Queen Anne.”

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that Marlborough had to remind them that their rights were a good barrier and reasonable security. With the utmost suavety he told them his thoughts "without disguise." Two days later he disguised them less, and said he hoped Godolphin would find some way of "not letting them play the fool." Yet the Queen "cannot give too kind an answer" to their proposals—at the same time that she must be careful to give Spain and Austria no reason to be angry. The next plan was that England and Holland jointly should govern in Charles III's name. It did not please the Emperor, who wished to do without Dutch help. And now Charles himself confirmed the offer to Marlborough in a manner suggesting that he accepted it, and the Dutch were upset again, though the fact was that the offer had been finally refused.

The question was complicated by the English desire to have the Protestant succession guaranteed by the Dutch. For it was as the price of this guarantee that the English offered a barrier to protect Holland from France. The Dutch wished that barrier to be as sound and thick as possible. They were so extravagant that Marlborough feared it would hinder the treaty for the succession. But what made them bold was not only the knowledge that England very much wanted their guarantee, but the talks they were having with the French about a peace. Marlborough suspected this as early as July, because they insisted so much about their barrier. By September he thought them running very fast towards peace, angry with the Emperor, jealous of England. Marlborough himself was approached by the Elector of Bavaria in October with a view to "advancing a good so great and necessary to

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Europe which has too long suffered the inevitable calamities of war." The good referred to was peace. But as these separate approaches seemed meant to divide the allies, in November the English Government took notice of them by giving the opinion that the allies should all be parties together in any treaty. Holland declared her willingness not to accept overtures for peace without her allies.

Marlborough was relieved. He was sure that if she had peace now France would soon be as strong and ambitious as ever. The war, he said and reiterated, must be carried on with vigour for "another year." Godolphin agreed, and had figures to show that France was fallen very low and would be on her knees in a year. Then there would be an "honourable, safe, and lasting peace"—the kind of peace that never was on sea or land. By November, 1706, Marlborough, then, was relieved by the resumption of an appearance of unanimity among the allies, and hoped all would agree that the war must be carried on till the French were more reasonable. *Non generant aquilæ columbas*. They believe too firmly that from the beginning wars beget treaties and treaties beget wars, and are content to leave peaceable citizens to puzzle over which came first.

XVII : MARLBOROUGH AND GODOLPHIN

ARRIVING in England in November, 1706, Marlborough met with a good reception. The Queen's speech might have been written by himself; for it spoke of "steady and serious resolutions to prosecute the advantages we have gained, till we reap the desired fruits of them in an honourable and durable peace. The Lords also expressed a hope, by continuing the war, to win a "just, safe and honourable" peace, with the Protestant succession guaranteed, trade and commerce improved, Charles III established in Spain, Holland with its barrier. And the Commons, in the same way, after congratulating the Queen on the successes of 1706 "that no age can equal," made mention of a "safe, honourable, and lasting peace." Six millions of money were voted for the coming year. It was also settled that the titles and honours of the Duke, and the palace of Blenheim, should descend through his daughter and their male heirs, since he had no son. These descendants were to have the pension of five thousand a year "for the more honourable support of their dignities." The standards taken at Ramillies were exhibited. There were cavalcades that passed in a few hours, and verses of praise and flattery that never died because they never lived. In the Government the Whigs took more places, Sunderland coming in as Secretary of State. Only St.

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John and Harley remained, of the Tories, in positions of power.

Marlborough, with the Duchess, Anne and Godolphin, was now supreme. When the Duke wrote to Godolphin, he spoke constantly of "you and me." "You and I are in conscience and honour bound . . . to bring this war to a happy end." Other men spoke of themselves as "trusty servants to the Queen, and who are entirely attached to your Grace and to my Lord Treasurer." The words are St. John's; and he goes on to speak of every man "that wishes the Queen's glory and prosperity, and that loves and honours my Lord Treasurer and your Grace." Lord Sunderland spoke of a letter being "for the service of the Queen, your Grace and Lord Treasurer." When Marlborough and Godolphin absented themselves from a Cabinet Meeting once, and Harley attempted to begin the business, the Duke of Somerset simply said he did not see how they could go on without the General and Lord Treasurer, and the Queen broke up the meeting. And Somers once took the liberty to tell Anne that the Duke was not merely a private subject. The eyes of Europe were fixed on him, and business was done with him as with one honoured by her "entire trust and favour." As all men depended on him it gave full force and effect to all that he did. The army unanimously obeyed him, because the soldiers looked up to him for advancement. Unspeakable inconvenience must ensue if any alteration were made which could induce ill-intentioned people to suppose that his position was no longer the same.

Marlborough would write to Godolphin of the necessity of letting Anne know "what you and I

Marlborough and Godolphin

think is her interest." It was implied over and over again that without them England would be lost. Marlborough wrote to Godolphin that he did with all his heart wish England prosperity, but that if she could not have it then it would be some satisfaction to him that she was no longer in his hands. In the same way he owned to the Duchess he had a tenderness for the Queen and could not agree with her opinion of her ; he could only believe that all the mischief came from Mrs. Masham's ambition and ill-judgment and Harley's knavery and artfulness. He would protest sometimes to the Queen that so long as she was served well he was indifferent who her servants were : at the same time, he must add that if he were with her and not in the Netherlands he could make her see—"let" her see—what trouble she must look forward to if she did without him and the Lord Treasurer. This was by no means as far as he sometimes went.

In the *Examiner* (No. 20) Swift said that the ministry had introduced certain new phrases into the Court style, such as "Madam, I cannot serve you while such a one is in employment. I desire humbly to resign my commission, if Mr. —— continues Secretary of State . . ." Both Marlborough and Godolphin used this style. For example, the Duke humbly acquainted the Queen that "no consideration could make him serve any longer with that man," Harley. Once, when Amsterdam was pressing him to take steps towards a peace, he told Anne that the reason was not fear of France, but knowledge that she was resolved to change parties. In the same letter he seems to attempt to bowl the Queen over by suggesting that he may die soon. He says that the French

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have orders to venture a battle, and he will not avoid it, thinking it absolutely necessary for her service ; so that " God only knows," whether this may not be the last letter he may have the honour to write, which causes him to beg with the same earnestness as if it were certainly to be his last, that she will only listen to Godolphin, for he would never have any thought but what was for her honour and true interest. So when the Queen congratulated him after Oudenarde, he took the opportunity of saying that he wished to serve her in the army only. But he went on to say that the victory showed the hand of God and the favour of Heaven to her ; and then that she must be convinced now that he only lived to serve her and thank God ; and at last, he told her that he thought her obliged as a good Christian to forgive and have no resentment against persons or parties, but to make use of such as would carry on this just war with vigour, which was the only way to preserve our religion, liberties and her crown. This he confirmed later by saying that he meant she could make no good use of the victory unless she followed Godolphin's advice ; in this also he drew her attention to the fact that certain unkind letters of hers before the battle had such an effect on his body as to make him very ill. He was certain that they could make the Queen comply " with what was necessary for saving herself " if only the Duchess, Godolphin, and he let her see that they were in despair. Once he told Anne straight that on the principle that " interest cannot lie " they could have no other interest but hers, and to make her throne powerful and stronger. They were taking care of her as if she were already imbecile, as Marlborough was reported to have



Sidney Godolphin
After Kneller

To face p. 176.

Marlborough and Godolphin

said she would be ; and they familiarly referred to themselves as her friends in phrases like “ If the Queen is not governed by her friends.” Godolphin told Marlborough that she should not be “ countenanced and encouraged ” in making complaints of the Duchess. His woefulness was very amusing when Anne stood out against him with “ unaccountable ” obstinacy : the battle—over an appointment for one of the Montagues—might have lasted till now, he said, if the Prince of Denmark had not thought fit to come in and look as if he thought it were dinner-time.

Marlborough had at his disposal several varieties of the indirect command to be used on Anne. One was that, as he would in return for her many favours die to make her government easy, he would take the liberty, “ with all submission on my knees,” to beg her for her own sake, the good of her country, and all the liberties of Europe—to let Godolphin have his own way. Another form was : “ For God’s sake, madam, consider that whatever may be said to amuse or delude you, it is utterly impossible for you to have ever more than a part of the Tories ; and though you could have them all, “ their number is not capable of doing you good. These things are so plain that I can’t doubt but your Majesty will be convinced that nothing can be so fatal to your service, as any way to discourage the Whigs, at this time, when after the blessing of this victory, you may be sure, that if you show a confidence in their zeal for your interests, they will all concur very cheerfully to make you great and happy as I wish. God Almighty bless and preserve you.” When an enemy was to be promoted to the rank of General he said that it would set up a standard

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of disaffection to rally all the malcontent officers in the army." But this was towards the end. When he knew himself beaten he used phrases which he could hardly have expected to act as commands, as when he begged the Queen to reflect what would be thought by all who had seen the "love, zeal, and duty" with which he had served her, when they saw that all he had done was not able to protect him against the malice of a bedchamber woman. If only the Duchess could have fought some of his campaigns for him and left him to talk to the Queen all might have been well. The Duchess was too hard, and Godolphin too soft, or, what comes to the same thing in a weak man, he was not adroit.

Marlborough and Godolphin were as two halves of a whole. Godolphin did what he was told and Marlborough always asked to be told what to do, promising to be governed entirely by that. Godolphin would ask Marlborough to write to the Queen begging her to comply with a request he (Godolphin) had made in vain, and insisting to her that he (Godolphin) would never propose anything which was not to her honour and advantage. With or without such instructions Marlborough was always advising her to trust Godolphin. The ordinary form was that she ought to give him the assistance he thinks proper and so enable her business to go well. But once he put it in a form showing perfectly how the sheep may be persuaded to think it leads the shepherd. It was, he said, necessary and just that she should "follow her inclinations" and support the Lord Treasurer, or all would go to confusion. To Godolphin he said at this point: "whatever man is your enemy shall never be my friend." Godolphin reciprocated

Marlborough and Godolphin

with a promise to second what Marlborough thought proper, however different it might be from what he should have chosen.

Godolphin used Marlborough's phraseology exactly, and when the Queen was refractory, spoke of her unwillingness to do anything for "those who have shown themselves most forward and zealous in promoting all the present advantages." How absolutely right he thought they were he showed when he had failed with the Queen, by quoting: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." And he could put into Marlborough's mouth the very words he would naturally use. Thus he advised him to press the Queen by reminding her that he had done some successful services to her and the country, and must beg leave to look on his own enemies as hers and would not therefore suffer these provocations to hinder him from activity for her service and the good of the country. When he was disgraced, he advised Marlborough to tell the Queen how much he was affected by the blow; in fact, to such a degree as would hardly leave him heart to carry on her service as before, so that he hoped she would let him retire.

The root of their difficulty lay in the fact that all depended on Anne's submissiveness and that this had been enforced by the Duchess, whose power had for a long time been but a shadow. The Queen had to be taken into partnership, nor could they conceal from her the fact that she was to have power only in so far as they exerted it for her. Anne had as much respect for the Duke as fear, but for the Duchess fear only. She was restive. "Why, for God's sake," she asked, must

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she be made miserable by having men of an incompatible temper, like Sunderland, thrust upon her? To admit Somers, again, seemed to her to mean "utter destruction" to her. When accused of discussing things with Harley she had to disclaim it altogether, and some time afterwards she protested that she had only Marlborough and Godolphin to rely on, could refuse them nothing; and though she called their talk of retiring "splenetic" she said it must not be, and to the end she did such things as write out and sign a letter sketched by the Prussian minister, shown to Marlborough, transmitted by him to Godolphin and then to her, and so to the minister, and finally the King—a letter to the King of Prussia designed to make him favourable to Anne and her Commander-in-Chief. The Duchess, too, was permitted to be truculent almost to the last. For a long time Anne would still speak of preserving for ever "a most sincere and tender passion" for her, and the Duchess would sign herself her "poor forsaken Freeman." But the Duchess would neither accept her successor, Mrs. Masham's position, nor take any steps to destroy it by blustering. When the woman married secretly, only the Queen knowing it, the Duchess must treat it as if it were an affront; for, under these circumstances, she pleaded her right to know as a relation. Naturally, then, at last Anne had to tell her that the same kindness could never exist again between them, but that she would be treated as the Duke of Marlborough's wife and the Queen's Groom of the State.

Marlborough and the Whigs knew as early as 1706 that she was "very ill with the Queen," as Sunderland put it, for speaking and acting honestly.

Marlborough and Godolphin

The Duke tried to induce her to be moderate, but continued to confide in her and showed her the Queen's letters to him with the warning that she was to be careful not to betray the fact in conversation, which would make the Queen more shy. He hoped, too, that ways might be found to make Mrs. Masham "very much afraid." But he had come in up the back stairs and he had to go down that way, since he could not beat the bed-chamber woman by riding the high horse or going down on his knees.

In the year of Ramillies these things cast very short, unapprehended shadows. Not yet was Godolphin compelled to say that the Queen's stubbornness made his life a burden, and repeat the words of Lord Croft: "Well, sirs, God's above."

XVIII : SIEGES AND OUDENARDE

THE year 1707 did Marlborough little good. Spain was finally lost by the defeat at Almanza. Eugene failed in an attack on Toulon. Villars routed the Imperial army on the Upper Rhine. England was strengthened by union with Scotland, and the consequent lapse of the Act of Security which might have brought Scotland a separate King at Anne's death. But those who liked the war were inclined to be satisfied with the success of 1706, and those who disliked it saw only that nothing came of the success. Even Marlborough, writing to Heinsius, spoke of the scarcity of money in the country and the decay of trade in the ports.

The campaign began in April with Marlborough's visit to Charles XII to divert him from an alliance with France and from breaking with Germany. By diplomacy and money he succeeded. Then in May he came to the Netherlands. The defeat of Almanza had already been announced, without producing any dissatisfaction among the people of the Netherlands, who were not enjoying the new united government. The French had taken the field under Vendome and the Elector of Bavaria at Mons, and the prospect of an invasion of France from the point of leaving off in 1706 was lost. Marlborough joined his army at Anderlercht. The enemy moved to Sombrefe, the allies to Soignies, and Marlborough was for advancing

Sieges and Oudenarde

to Nivelles to attack them, but the Deputies, after giving their consent, decided that it was dangerous, and they retreated to Beaulieu. Marlborough's plan, then, was to obtain more freedom by telling Heinsius that he intended not to take risks. But for a long time the two armies sat at Meldert and at Gembloux, each waiting for the other to make the mistake of moving.

After six weeks the allies' army moved from Meldert over the Dyle to Genappe, meaning to offer battle, only to find Vendôme made a "shameful march" to Mons. Marlborough advanced to Nivelles. Again he had hopes of getting into touch with the enemy as they changed camps, but they escaped to the neighbourhood of Mons. The allies retired to Soignies again, where they had a fortnight of rain.

The Duke himself, however, had at least some entertainment from a visit paid him now by Lord Peterborough, who was increasing his knowledge of kings and postillions by a European tour, before going home to give an account of his conduct to Parliament. He was the man who called the two claimants for the Spanish crown an odd "pair of louts" to raise such a stir. He conjured with small armies, and his quickness deceived the eye, and when he had gone through all his tricks he fell through a trap door, and, reappearing in the Netherlands, came to see Marlborough. Marlborough did not like him, and had refused to let his daughter marry the Earl's son. Moreover, he had done Marlborough an ill turn under William in the matter of Fenwick's plot. But the man was by nature vinegar to the Duke's oil. He could write, for example, and he could talk, brilliantly and never discreetly, though he, too, could flatter

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and lie. There was nothing that might not be expected from him, said Marlborough, who had observed that the next misfortune to having friendship with such people was having a dispute. And after he had left Soignies the Duke wrote to the Duchess bidding her be careful how she answered him, if Peterborough wrote to her, "for sooner or later it will be in print." The Earl carried with him a sort of letter of recommendation to Godolphin, which said chiefly that so far as the Duke was capable of judging he had "acted with great zeal."

When the rain was over, Marlborough marched to Ath and over the Dender to turn the enemy's position at Chièvres. But the enemy fell back to the Scheldt. At Oudenarde he crossed the Scheldt with every confidence that the enemy would avoid battle. The most he could do was to drive them into their own country; and this he did. His camping at Helchin forced them over the Scheldt away to a strong post under the cannon of Lille, well within their boundary. The artillery for besieging Lille was not ready, and the rains began. Here, therefore, the campaign ended in September, and Marlborough had time to digest the news of the defeat at Toulon, to look about for a successor to Stepney—"somebody that has dexterity and no pride"—at the Hague, to correspond with Godolphin about the next campaign and the possibility of Eugene commanding in Spain, and to wish he was nothing but a soldier, with no Whigs, Tories, or bedchamber women to consider. At the Hague in October he found reason to expect nothing better next year from the Dutch. So sick was he that he was genuinely inclined to resign for fear of another blank year.

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Nothing, he said, should prevail with him to lose the reputation he had hazarded for the war. And things were not "so well with the Queen"; in fact, he was not perfectly confident that if he and Godolphin threatened to resign she would not part with them; for she had just chosen two bishops who were more to Harley's taste than his, and Harley was protesting that of course the Duke and Godolphin were the fixed centre of the nation, and that he himself was "above telling a solemn lie," and never spoke or thought of those "two persons," the bishops. The Duke's last letter to the Duchess from the Hague pronounced: "Believe me, nothing is worth rowing for against wind and tide—at least you will think so when you come to my age."

This year he was home early—in the middle of November. Except that there were no processions, he might almost have been a victorious general, so thick was the political air with quarrel and discontent. He had always said that he belonged to no party, which might have been explained by the fact that the Queen was a Tory and his wife a Whig, while he himself was naturally Tory, and yet found his supporters chiefly among the Whigs. Now it appeared that he and Godolphin had got so far from the parties that they had both against them. The Whig Lords spoke on the decay of trade and the scarcity of money, and on the mismanagement of the Navy and the consequent losses of merchant ships. Admiral Churchill, in particular, a pure ancient Tory, naked and unashamed, was pointed at for the bad state of the Navy; it was hoped that seamen would be encouraged, trade protected, and a new spirit and vigour put into the administration of the Navy.

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And the Tory leaders appeared on the same side as the Whigs. But their motives were not the same. The Whigs, so far as their attitude was interested, wanted to assert themselves and obtain new power : the Tories wanted to destroy ; they attacked Churchill in order to destroy Marlborough, and the Whigs drew back. This difference was increased when the case of Peterborough came up. The Tories were willing to support him to the end, which the Whigs could not do. He was distinctly an opposition hero or man of straw. When he was done with, the Tories crept nearer to the Duke. The Whig Commons had voted the supplies, and the Queen had repeated her desire to bring the war to a safe and honourable conclusion, but in the Lords the Tories objected to the war of offence in the Netherlands. There the Duke was using great armies, while in Spain, which the whole war was about, the smallest armies were used, and Generals like Peterborough took the blame. But for the time being the Duke quieted his opponents by leading them to expect that Eugene would take command in Spain and that the Emperor in future would punctually perform his promises. The Whigs then passed resolutions for carrying on the war until neither Spain nor the West Indies remained with France. They had made a display of strength and gained a bishopric and assurance from the Queen that the Tories were to have no more.

The chief person to suffer was Harley, who had once seemed a " moderate Tory " created in Marlborough's own image for use in Parliament. He used to hope the Duke would rescue them from the violence of either party, and to be " unable to forbear " saying that he knew no difference

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between a mad Whig and a mad Tory. In reality he was, like Marlborough, for the Queen. By means of Mrs. Masham he was hoping to "set up for himself" with a new party, which, like Marlborough's, was to be no party. But the result of the latest shuffling was to place the Duke with the Whigs, far too definitely and decisively for his purpose. A clerk in Harley's office was found in secret correspondence with France. He himself was found trying to manipulate the moderate of both parties for a coalition. He fell, therefore, "under the displeasure of Godolphin," and Marlborough told the Queen to regard him as forced out of her service if she kept Harley in it. He tried to carry on a Cabinet Meeting, from which Marlborough deliberately kept away, and failing altogether, he had to go. With him went also St. John and others of that particular shade. Robert Walpole came in as Secretary at War in place of St. John. This was a victory, wrote Bishop Burnet's wife, which might have as happy effects as any of the Duke's. It coincided, too, with the failure of a Jacobite conspiracy and French invasion which had been wrung out of the Stuart party, as a necessary effort, by the union of England and Scotland. The French fleet appeared off the Firth of Forth, but found an English fleet there. This failure could not but help to combine the Protestant parties for Anne and the Protestant succession and against France, and to discredit all Jacobite Tories. It should, therefore, have been a good moment for Marlborough to leave England for another campaign, had not the Duchess given the Queen an unusual amount of trouble at the very moment when she was sullen at parting with Harley, Abigail's relative.

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As Eugene did not go to Spain, he became Marlborough's colleague in the northern seat of war. The Elector of Hanover commanded a lesser army on the Rhine. Marlborough opened the campaign near Brussels, while Eugene collected an army that was to appear to act separately but to be ever ready to unite with the other. Some delay had been caused by Marlborough having to go to Hanover to induce the Elector to take the Army on the Rhine and promise him troops, and also by the backwardness of the spring which provided no grass for the horses till early May. As usual, the Duke was full of complaints, because nobody was pleased though he gave himself no rest and ruined his constitution : next winter he hoped he might make it necessary that he should stay abroad to avoid trouble at home. The French, under Vendome, were as strong as ever again. Marlborough, with a bad year behind him, was also in a condition likely to produce a decisive engagement if a chance were given. The allied army was some 70,000 strong. The French had nearly 100,000, but some of these were likely to be drawn upon for the other quarters of the war.

The enemy moved first towards the forest of Soignies, which drew Marlborough to the south of Hal. And here they might have fought over the question of Brussels had Eugene been able to come up. The French seemed to be inclined for an action. Instead they moved on towards Louvain, and Marlborough, moving more rapidly stood between them and the Dyle on their arrival. Nothing was done there. Eugene was again sent for. He was to come with his cavalry rapidly through Maestricht, and the Duke would make his dispositions for the moment of his arrival.



Oudenaarde
After Van der Meulen

Sieges and Oudenarde

The next move, however, was Vendome's. At the beginning of July he marched to Hal, and at the same time Bruges and Ghent admitted some of his officers by a preconcerted treachery. They took Plassendael, they threatened Oudenarde, and intended to take up a position at Lessines to cover the siege. Marlborough himself had to stay at Assche covering Brussels, but Oudenarde was strengthened, and at this moment Eugene arrived, without an army but with a stimulus to general and men. Very rapidly the army marched from Assche to Lessines on the Dender, so as to arrive before Vendome, which they did during the night. The enemy fell back to cross the Scheldt at Gavre, to the north of Oudenarde. Marlborough was between them and France: if he could reach Oudenarde in strength before them he would still be so. The army marched again therefore at daybreak, with an advance party under Cadogan to bridge the Scheldt near Oudenarde. The enemy were over first. Their advance guard coming down the river on the far side could see the mass of the allies still on the other side, but the cavalry crossing. Vendome would have attacked at once, but he had a royal Duke with him, the Duke of Burgundy, who could do as he wished. Vendome preferred to occupy the villages close down along the river. The Duke of Burgundy preferred the higher ground above the brook Norcken, which runs parallel to the Scheldt and about two miles north of it. For the most part this higher ground above Huyse was chosen: only a small detachment by a mistake occupied the village of Eyne. By the time these men reached Eyne some of the allied infantry and cavalry were ready for them, attacked them there, and killed, captured or

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scattered the whole. Prince George of Hanover, afterwards George II, fought here with great bravery. When his horse was shot under him he charged on foot, sword in hand, and brought off an officer prisoner.*

The Duke of Burgundy would have been willing to avoid a battle even now, too late. But still he could not decide whether to attack or to wait for the enemy. He did both. He waited above the Norcken, and he sent cavalry down towards Oudenarde, and he recalled those cavalry. When the allies had almost all crossed the Scheldt the Duke of Burgundy again thought he would advance, and Vendome advanced, but was ordered to remain on the left. Marlborough had nothing to fear on his right. Towards the as yet uncompleted left came the French infantry, thirty battalions of guards. The allied infantry in Groenwald were pressed back, but it was a much enclosed country about a brook, and they made a stubborn resistance behind the hedges. The superior numbers of the French, however, were not fully occupied, and could extend along the brook and occupy villages further to their right, outflanking their opponents. Marlborough was ready with relief. His fresh infantry stopped the French at close quarters, got in amongst them, and heaved them back to a certain distance, where for a time they kept the enemy employed without giving way.

On the right Eugene advanced and broke the first line of the enemy. The Prussian cuirassiers coming in then charged through the second to the chapel of Royeghem, near the Norcken brook; but there they in turn were stopped by French

* Millner.

Sieges and Oudenarde

squadrons and riddled by bullets from every hedge around them.

Marlborough, at the centre, pressed back the enemy as far as Diepenbech by stern fighting from hedge to hedge. It was while he paused there that he saw the opportunity which he won the victory by taking swiftly. The French right reached only to the foot of the hill of Oycke. The higher ground, capped by a windmill, was unoccupied. To this then he sent Overkirk with infantry and the Danish cavalry. When this extended left had touched the village of Oycke, with its left it began to turn upon its right, down upon the hostile right flank so as to enclose it and to threaten its line of retreat back to the Norcken and the hills of Huyse. This enclosing movement was continued until the line of retreat was quite cut off and the hostile right was being attacked on both sides. Their cavalry trying to break out were killed or captured.

Vendome himself tried to stiffen the centre by dismounting and leading the infantry from the extreme left, but in vain. The ground was difficult, the battle already lost. The right was being annihilated, and would have been so entirely but that in the falling darkness the right of Eugene and the extreme left were beginning to fire into one another. At nine, therefore—it was a July evening, July 11th—the troops were ordered to halt where they stood. Thus the enemy's centre escaped. In order to retire regularly Vendome would have united the infantry that was still almost untouched, on the left at Mullem, to the fragments of the right. But the majority were panic-stricken, and he could make but a small rearguard to cover their flight.

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Marlborough and Eugene were in no condition for a regular pursuit. Night coming they were forced to leave the enemy, who were "glad to go so well off with their warm supper."* But still more French were decoyed by the allied drummers beating the French assembly while some French refugee officers gave the rallying words of the regiments; and at dawn next day forty squadrons of the allied cavalry were sent to goad the flight.

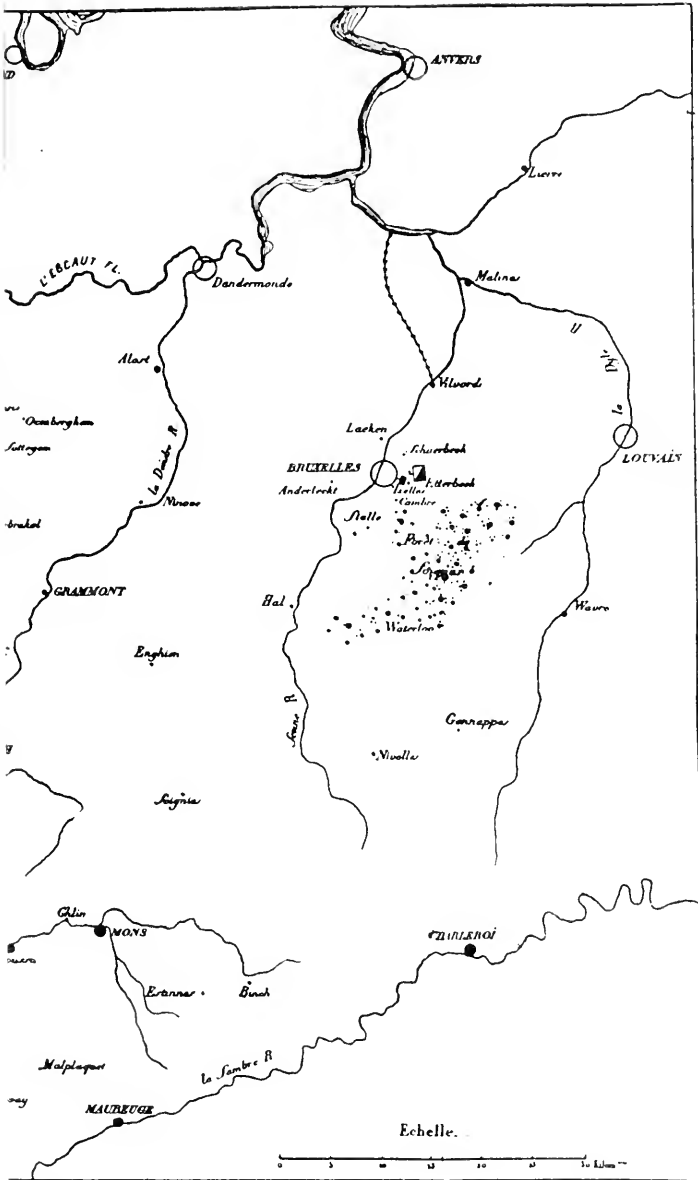
The French lost 4,000 killed and 2,000 wounded and 9,000 prisoners; 5,000 deserted. The allies, who had marched nearly fifty miles in the sixty hours preceding the battle, lost perhaps 5,000 killed and wounded. The dead and the crying wounded lay in every hole and corner of the field,† in that narrow space where the allied left had rolled round their right. Marlborough told the Duchess there was much blood, but thanked God the English had suffered least, being on the right. For thus protecting him and making him the instrument of so much happiness to the Queen and nation (if she would please to make use of it), he thanked God. But his head ached terribly. He wished he could have had two hours or even one hour more of daylight to destroy the enemy and "finish the war."

On the next day he sent on Count Lottum to the enemy's lines between Ypres and Warneton, which were captured at once, just before Berwick came up from the Moselle with a reinforcement. Marlborough, with his main army, took up his position between Menin and Comines on the 15th. He was to be reinforced by Eugene's army.

* John Marshall Deane.

† *Ibid.*

LANDRE



nombre 1708

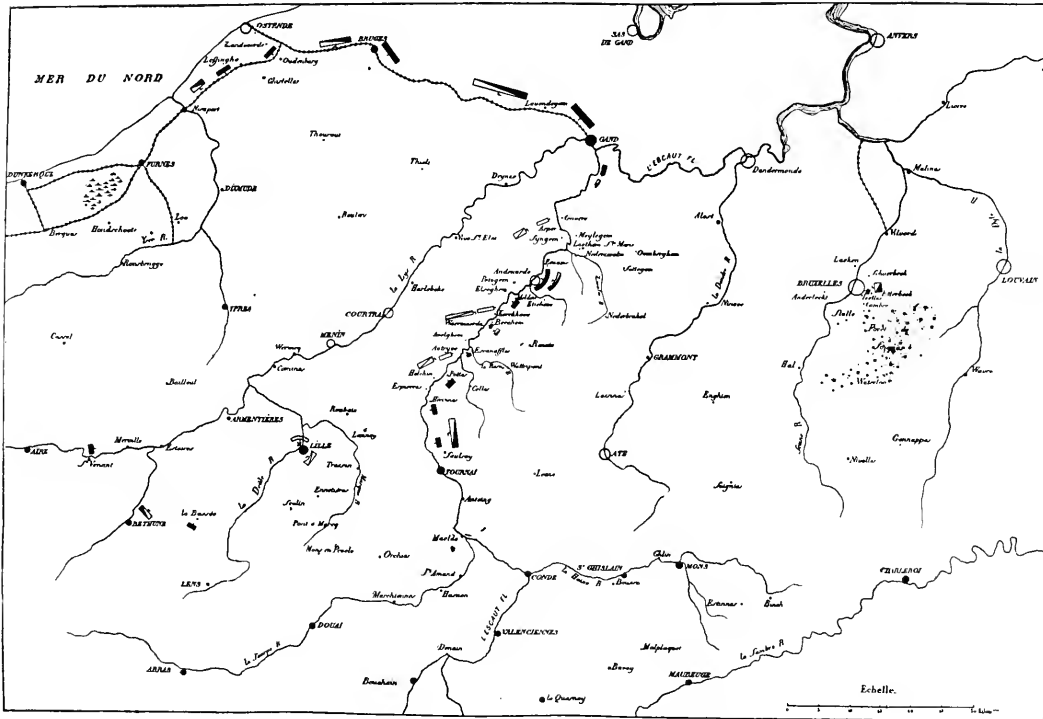
ins (ces derniers fournissant quelques détachements aux camps
 us le duc de Bourgogne et Vendôme, d'Hermies au Fauzoy
 10 bataillons et 10 escadrons arrivés sous M. de Chévalier,
 Béthune, Salot-Venant et la Hassoë 14 bataillons et 18 esca-
 dre, devant Bruxelles

llois et 30 escadrons au siège de la citadelle de Lille et porta
 bataillons. Les alliés s'étaient mis en marche sur leurs objectifs
 Lutrye. Leurs trois colonnes avaient la composition suivante
 . so marche sur Gavre, 16 bataillons et 40 escadrons
 marche sur Kerkbore, 50 bataillons et 100 escadrons
 b marche sur Lutrye, 19 bataillons et 50 esca-drons

Places françaises. ●
 Places ennemies ○

Français	Infanterie	
	Cavalerie	
Alliés	Infanterie	
	Cavalerie	

CAMPAGNE DE 1708 EN FLANDRE



Position des deux armées au milieu de la nuit du 26 au 27 novembre 1708

L'armée française fut ainsi répartie :

Débarde le canal de Gand à Bruges et le canal d'Oudené à Mouscron, 40 bataillons et 40 canons. Il faut encore de ce nombre 30 bataillons et 6 canons en marche vers le canal d'Alstede, de Gand sur Courtrai.

Le canal de l'Escaut tout entier, s'étendant à Tournai, par 34 bataillons et 175 canons, dépend de la situation suivante :

14 bataillons et 75 canons, devant Anvers sous le maréchal d'Hastoy, 9 bataillons à Malin, sous M. de Tregou et ses ordres de M. de Sédouin.

2 bataillons et 107 canons à Bréscun, sous M. de Bouvillon.

8 bataillons à Escaudewaert sous M. de La Cloude.

10 bataillons à Peltin, sous M. de Guibéran.

13 bataillons et 80 canons (les Français fortifièrent quelques établissements aux camps de Poire et d'Escaudewaert, sous le duc de Bourgogne et Wallonie, d'Escaudewaert et Malin). Il faut encore maintenant 10 bataillons et 10 canons en marche sous M. de Chastellain, sur le territoire de Louvain à Malin, sous l'ordre de la Wallonie. 14 bataillons et 10 canons sous l'Escaut de Bruges, sous Bruges.

Après avoir laissé 30 bataillons et 35 canons au siège de la citadelle de Lille et porté le garnison d'Escaudewaert à 18 bataillons, les autres d'Escaudewaert ont été envoyés au camp de Courtrai, de Bréscun et d'Escaudewaert. Après avoir montré au camp de Courtrai, de Bréscun et d'Escaudewaert, les bataillons ont été envoyés sur le camp de Louvain, en marche sur Courtrai, 18 bataillons et 40 canons sous M. de Marbousgh, en marche sur Courtrai, 10 bataillons et 100 canons sous M. de Spina, en marche sur Courtrai, 10 bataillons et 100 canons.

Places fortifiées ●
Places assiégées ○

Français
— Infanterie
— Cavalerie
— Artillerie
— Bataillon

Echelle.

Sieges and Oudenarde

France lay open to him. His advance parties burnt the suburbs of Arras. They exacted five hundred thousand crowns from Artois, and hoped for as much from Picardy. A small party of English had landed in Normandy to co-operate in the invasion of France. But the French were still masters of Ghent, denying him the use of the Scheldt and the Lys; nor had he cannon yet for a siege. Lille, then, he proposed to mask and to push on into France.

But both Eugene and the Dutch thought this too bold. To take Lille was considered necessary first, and was begun in the middle of August. Fifteen thousand soldiers, under Boufflers, defended it. Vendome and Berwick, with over a hundred thousand men lay near, to molest the besiegers or cut off their communications. Half of the allies' much smaller army was occupied at Lille under Eugene. Marlborough, with the other half at Helchin, covered the siege and watched the movements of the enemy. Many troops had to be detached also to safeguard the stores and artillery coming from Brussels. The siege materials alone employed sixteen thousand horses.

When the second parallel of the besiegers' entrenchments had been drawn, the guns mounted and brought to bear, and some assaults made on the fortifications, Vendome and Berwick combined their armies near Lessines. Marlborough waited for them. His troops were in good heart, their foot, he believed, in a bad condition. Eugene was with him in consultation. Moreover, their two marshals differed in opinion, which gave him time to entrench. In any case, he wished they would venture, and thought "with the blessing of God" to beat them. The enemy came round

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France lay open to him. His advance parties burnt the suburbs of Arras. They exacted five hundred thousand crowns from Artois, and hoped for as much from Picardy. A small party of English had landed in Normandy to co-operate in the invasion of France. But the French were still masters of Ghent, denying him the use of the Scheldt and the Lys; nor had he cannon yet for a siege. Lille, then, he proposed to mask and to push on into France.

But both Eugene and the Dutch thought this too bold. To take Lille was considered necessary first, and was begun in the middle of August. Fifteen thousand soldiers, under Boufflers, defended it. Vendome and Berwick, with over a hundred thousand men lay near, to molest the besiegers or cut off their communications. Half of the allies' much smaller army was occupied at Lille under Eugene. Marlborough, with the other half at Helchin, covered the siege and watched the movements of the enemy. Many troops had to be detached also to safeguard the stores and artillery coming from Brussels. The siege materials alone employed sixteen thousand horses.

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through Orchies and waited, while an appeal was made to the Court for directions. Chamillart arrived, and together they decided that the position was too strong. They appealed to Versailles again.

Marlborough would have come out at them, had the Dutch deputies not been alarmed. Berwick himself thought the French would have lost. When at length orders came to Vendome to risk an attack it was too late ; he took his army across the Scheldt, where he could threaten Brussels, Oudenarde and Menin.

The siege went ill. The engineers dissatisfied Marlborough. The storming parties suffered to the extent of four and five thousand in a day on two occasions, and in one of them, where 3,000 British fell, Eugene was wounded. For some time, therefore, Marlborough had charge of his army and the siege, too. It was during these days, at the end of September, that the French rushed a large supply of gunpowder into Lille. The horsemen, carrying each a sack of powder, bore the friendly sign of a green sprig in their hats, and when challenged gave themselves out as German dragoons. A large number got through before the ruse was discovered, and then of those in the rear a good many were blown to pieces by the powder exploding under the enemy's fire. But half of them—they had been 2,500—got through to the besieged.

Marlborough had now to open a new line of communication, since the French mastered the one to Brussels; and he chose Ostend, where supplies had arrived with the General Erle, who had made the useless attempt on the coast of Normandy. After draining an inundation between Ostend and Nieuport and bridging the Nieuport



Lille
After Van der Meulen

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Canal, the way was open, and seven hundred waggons were ready to travel by Thourout and Roulers. The enemy sent 22,000 men, under Count de la Mothe, to Bruges for attacking it. To defend it Brigadier Webb went to Thourout a third of the way from Ostend, with 8,000 men. Cadogan was at Roulers, the half-way house, with cavalry. And there were 2,500 men escorting it when the convoy left Bruges. When the waggons were coming through Cochlaer, Webb had news that De la Mothe was at Ichteghem, five miles off. He moved in that direction and posted himself at Wynendael in a gap among woods which the enemy must pass through. Infantry in the woods on both sides and infantry and artillery across the gap had made it impregnable when de la Mothe arrived, after being amused and delayed by a few of Count Lottum's cavalry. Some time was wasted in cannonading which effected little before the enemy attempted the gap. It was nearly dark, and the fire of the infantry and grenadiers at close quarters on both sides took them by surprise. The cavalry coming up only completed the slaughter and confusion. De la Mothe moved off before a general advance and the convoy was through. Four thousand was the French loss, the allies' under one thousand. Cadogan, coming up after seeing the convoy pass, wanted to charge the retreating force with his cavalry, but Webb was content. It was Cadogan who brought the news to Marlborough, who at once congratulated Webb. In a letter to Godolphin he spoke of Webb and Cadogan having done well "as they always do." If they had not succeeded the convoy must have been lost and the siege of Lille raised. But when the *Gazette* printed the news on October

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3rd it was Cadogan who was reported the victor, this being a mistake or a part of a plot, for the Duke's Secretary, Cardonnel, had so announced it to the editor, Steele. Cadogan was a Whig and a favourite of Marlborough's. And Webb,

As Paris handsome and as Hector brave,

went home to tell the Queen about it and his account duly appeared in the *Gazette*. Here then was a tale that could be used to adorn an argument against Marlborough or Whigs in general, and it was so used, for Webb was a friend of Swift. Yet Marlborough hoped that he would be made Lieutenant-General for the action, and he was.

Lille was not taken yet. Vendome flooded the country again, which Marlborough countered by low boats and high carts to carry ammunition, packed in skins. When the road from Ostend was at length closed by the surprising of Nieuport and a hostile garrison there, Lille was doomed. The assault was prepared, and Boufflers capitulated on October 23rd. But there was still the citadel, which the surviving 5,000 men of the garrison now entered. Marlborough was prepared for a winter campaign, and the enemy was made to suffer for it by his foraging parties in Artois and Furnes, supported by detachments at La Bassee, at Lens and at Dixmude. A new enemy now appeared. The Elector of Bavaria came to Mons at the end of November with 15,000 men from the Rhine and proceeded to threaten Brussels. Nor, it seemed, could Marlborough relieve it, since Vendome held the Scheldt at a series of strong positions from Tournay to Ghent, but especially about Oudenarde. Marlborough resorted to a trick. He pretended that his army was

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to be put into cantonments till the end of the siege and would then approach Ghent. The field artillery was sent to Menin, quarters for the Commander-in-Chief were fixed at Courtray. The army itself was looking forward to rest, when the order came to march. Detachments went ahead to throw bridges over the Scheldt above and below Oudenarde, the plan being to rush through the lines of the Scheldt to Brussels while the enemy were still drowsed by the rumour that the allies were at rest. The enemy were not prepared. A thick fog hung over the river. The whole army crossed unmolested. The Elector of Bavaria, who had summoned Brussels to surrender and begun to storm it, heard the news and left before Marlborough with a detachment reached Alost. So precipitately had he gone that he left his cannon and his wounded to the enemy.

Communications between Lille and Brussels were now safely re-opened, and Eugene informed Boufflers of it and suggested favourable conditions for a surrender. But the old marshal waited yet another week before leaving the citadel and setting free the allies' army, which had been reduced by about one half. It was December 11th, and the fourth month of the siege was almost at an end. Though the usual time for going into winter quarters was passed, Marlborough secured his communications by bridges over the Scheldt and Lys and began the siege of Ghent, while Eugene covered it with the rest of the troops. The weather was cold and foggy, and frost delayed the opening of trenches and froze the canals. Marlborough got wet feet every day in the trenches and a cold and sore throat. But Ghent surrendered on January 1st, 1709. At the same time the enemy

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abandoned Bruges, and the campaign was now ended, to Marlborough's "heart's desire." The army went into winter quarters.

After so much war Marlborough immediately began a long campaign of peace. Secret unofficial negotiations between France and Holland had been going on for some time, and now Marlborough was to take his part. The basis suggested by Louis was that he should not have Spain, the Indies, Milan, or the Netherlands; that the Dutch should have a barrier. Marlborough transmitted the proposal to Godolphin and the Queen, without himself offering an opinion, but urging that the Dutch should not be informed yet of the terms in case they should insist on peace. In fact, he was against the peace. He drew attention to the activity which the French were already showing in collecting troops and stores, and gave his opinion that they were not yet brought nearly so low as was imagined in England.

At the beginning of March, 1709, he arrived in London. The Peers congratulated and thanked him and carried an address that the Queen should include among the conditions of peace the acknowledgment by Louis of the Queen's title and the Protestant succession, and the removal of the Pretender out of France. The Commons added that Dunkirk harbour and fortifications ought to be demolished. News then arrived that the French had made fresh proposals at the Hague, this time to the Dutch Government openly. They would give up Spain, the Indies, Milan—the Netherlands as at the Peace of Ryswick, and Menin, too, hardly Lille, but Ypres instead of it. The Empire was to be as after Ryswick. The terms were not refused. Eugene was coming to

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represent the Empire. Marlborough went over for England, with these conditions to insist on, that the whole Spanish monarchy should be restored to the House of Austria, the Queen's title and the Protestant succession acknowledged, the Pretender removed, Dunkirk demolished, a barrier ensured to the Dutch with the Queen's guarantee if they in return would guarantee the Protestant succession. Heinsius at once told him that terms so extreme would ruin the negotiations. He in his turn thought the barrier required by the Dutch—to include Ostend and Dendermond—exorbitant, "a small kingdom." The Dutch, too, distrusted him because the offer of the Government of the Netherlands had been renewed after Oudenarde. He had not positively rejected it. Somers advised him to accept; the Queen left it to him. The Dutch, too, believed that he was prolonging the war for his own purposes, while they fought only with great reluctance for practical ends which they now saw within reach.

There is little doubt but that Marlborough preferred war abroad to the kind of peace he would have had at home between the politicians and the Duchess. It was his element, and he was supreme in it. Being a man of genius as soldier and diplomatist, and being in no form a man of pleasure, he would naturally give up very reluctantly what was life to him. And so long as he was abroad winning a battle now and then he suffered comparatively little from his English enemies. Godolphin bore the brunt. He himself remained indispensable to the Queen. Moreover, he made money by salaries, percentages, sales of commissions, perquisites, etc. But at home, the clever Whigs, uncomfortable men, younger men than

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himself for the most part, would have made life intolerable. He preferred Cadogan or Villars. At the same time he was always talking about an honourable, safe and lasting peace. If Holland would go on another year he said in 1706 such a peace might be expected. Whenever he won a battle he said that now you could have any terms you wished. This remark alternated with the other one that you must let the French see that the war will be carried on till you can have a good peace. What he meant when he said over and over again that he was tired and wanted to be quiet if only the Queen was safe, who knows? Was it as much as an idle dream when he wished that the campaign would be successful so that he could have the happiness of being with the Duchess in quiet next summer for the remainder of his life? It seems possible that when he was exhausted and felt his age he exaggerated to himself the pleasures of ease, but that his normal condition of activity was really satisfying on the whole, and that he had perhaps intimations that should it cease by some mischance he would become scrap iron. Of course he knew and felt that as a general and a diplomatist, as ruler of England, he should bring the war to an end at some time, and his conscience reminded him of it at intervals. But he knew also that at any time he could make peace, if he wished, on fair terms.

Now, in the winter of 1708-1709, after a very long campaign, he saw that peace might be unavoidable. That he believed it seems certain from the letters to the Duchess where he requests her to have the sideboard of plate in readiness, and reminds her that he must now have a canopy or chair of State which he has never had since the Queen's

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accession. As he was nearly fifty-nine, the weakness would have been excusable had he grasped eagerly at peace. It is said that there was, however, one particular reason why he did not. His nephew, the Duke of Berwick, relates that in 1708 he received a private letter from Marlborough signifying that it was a favourable moment for peace negotiations. He did it through his nephew, thinking it might advantage him. But de Chamillart "through excess of policy" thought the overture due to the bad situation of the allies, though Berwick was sure that apprehension had no share in the matter. De Chamillart's answer so offended Marlborough, says his nephew, that it was the principal cause of his aversion to peace thereafter.

After a visit to England, Marlborough came back to the Hague with Lord Townshend as a fellow plenipotentiary. They were to insist further that certain towns, from Furnes along the frontier to Maubeuge, should be delivered by France to King Charles, that the French Protestants should be restored to their civil and religious rights, that a commercial treaty favourable to England should be prepared, that Newfoundland and Hudson's Bay were to be restored. The French tried to get at the allies separately. They are said to have offered Marlborough four millions if he obtained certain concessions for Louis. But he maintained that Philip was to have no compensation. Lest he should look singular, he appears not to have contested the humiliation clause that Louis should himself take steps to turn his grandson out of Spain. He said, too, that he should do all he could to keep up the spirit there was in Holland against the French. He repeated that "in one year more" they could have what peace they liked. Yet he

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appears to have been surprised when Louis refused the terms, and announced to his people that if he must continue the war it was better to contend with his enemies than with his own family. In the negotiations following between England and Holland, Marlborough still showed his fear that the Dutch would concede something of Spain to Philip, and that once their barrier was assured they would think only of peace. Nor did he sign the treaty, with Townshend, because he disliked the sort of peace which it boded.

On the whole, another campaign must have been a more agreeable prospect for him than a peace. At the thanksgiving for the victory of Oudenarde, the Duchess had treated the Queen to an exhibition of all her tantrums, reproaching and commanding her. Yet the Whigs were still relying on her to get what they wanted out of the Queen, and as she herself was powerless, Marlborough had to do it himself. He had thus to force Somers upon the unwilling Queen as President of the Council. To offend the Queen or the Whigs was inevitable, and he could not choose : so strong was his wife, and so necessary was it that he should still believe that the Queen would stand anything. What wonder that Anne should prefer Tories ? They were mostly stupid, but so was she, and she was a Tory, and so were her friends. The Whigs were the friends, or had been, of those who were no longer her friends. And for the same reason the Whigs had no more need to fear than to like Godolphin. He was no Whig, and his Toryism was no longer sacred to Anne since he had helped to thrust so many Whigs on her. The Duke, too, with his impossible and now useless wife, was not one of them. Perhaps

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they could do better if they took to Harley and Mrs. Masham instead, duller people whom it was easier to manipulate. At any rate, they succeeded almost in making a Tory of the Duchess by their approach to Mrs. Masham and retirement from herself.

XIX : MALPLAQUET

THANKS to long preparations and the King's appeal, the French had as strong an army as ever in 1709 when Villars took the field in May at Lens. Next month the Marshal was joined by the old Pretender, with a recommendation from Madame de Maintenon, saying that he was an adventurer who would need nothing more if he died, while if he lived he would have a reputation that might be useful to him.* Negotiations were about to be broken off when the allies also took the field in June between Menin and Oudenarde. They had over a hundred thousand men, the French ninety thousand. Marlborough and Eugene moving past Lille into France, encamped beside the upper Deule, opposite the enemy's strong lines that stretched from Aunay by La Bassée to Bethune. Villars drew in behind the lines, in case of an attack, even parts of the garrison of Tournay. In reality his position was too strong, but Marlborough pretended to be about to attack it at La Bassée, and then, by a sudden and silent movement, withdrew to Tournay. He surrounded the town unexpectedly, while it still lacked part of its garrison. It was still exceptionally strong in its fortifications, and Villars, expecting it to occupy the allies the whole of the campaign, set to work to strengthen his lines and continue them along the Scarpe to the Scheldt.

* Villars.

Malplaquet

But at the end of July the town capitulated before Villars could carry out his intention of breaking through the besiegers. The garrison retired into the citadel for another siege. The "infernal labyrinth" of subterranean works, defensive and offensive, made the warfare the most horrible to which men had at that time advanced. Soldiers refused to enter some of the dungeons, until led on by experienced miners, or driven by the encouragements of Eugene and Marlborough visiting the trenches in person. By the beginning of September, nevertheless, a general assault was ready. The garrison hung out a white flag and surrendered the citadel. They, or the two-thirds of the original number surviving, returned to France to serve, when an equal number of prisoners had been restored. The besieged had lost nearly two thousand killed, the besiegers five thousand. The only relief seems to have been hunting, for in August Villars sent back some hounds with huntsmen who were taken at the gate of Marchiennes, saying that he did not really suspect them of curiosity about Marchiennes, but counted on their not hunting another time so near him.

Marlborough at once set about his next business of investing Mons and breaking through the lines of the Trouille, the Trouille being the tributary which enters the Haine near Mons. Lord Orkney went ahead to take St. Ghislain and cross the Haine there, but failed and crossed at Havre, on the east of Mons. The main army crossed the lines of the Trouille successfully, isolating Mons. But Villars lay ready in a strong position behind the forest land between Mons and Bavai, with his left to the Haine. If the enemy advanced they

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must pass either through the woods or by one of the two gaps of Boussu and Aulnois, which Villars watched.* On September 9th the armies faced one another through the gap of Aulnois.

It is a comparatively high country, little broken with features of interest or of advantage to armies manœuvring. The woods of beech, birch, ash and sycamore are the remnants of the old forest of Lanriere,† and the gap of Aulnois between the two portions known as Lanriere wood and Taisniere or Blaregnies wood, is about half a mile across. A small old church, called by the peasantry La Chapelle Malbrouk, marks the centre of the battle of Malplaquet, or of Taisniere, as Orkney thought it would be known, or the battle of the woods. It is the country spread out before anyone looking south from the highest point about Mons. On September 11th it was sodden with long rain.

On Monday, the 9th, for all that can be learnt, it was possible for Eugene and Marlborough to attack. A council of war decided to wait for troops from St. Ghislain, and Villars spent this grace in entrenching his gap and the woods. His army had been exhilarated and strengthened by the arrival of Boufflers to serve under him. Close behind lay the frontier of France. They were its only defences, and they were about 80,000 against 100,000.

Eugene and Marlborough rode to and fro reconnoitring. Orkney believed that Boufflers sought an interview. The delay continued throughout Tuesday. The French and allied officers were conversing in a hundred different places, and Orkney concluded there would not be a battle.‡

* "Malplaquet" by Hilaire Belloc.

† John Hill Burton.

‡ English Historical Review. Vol. 19.

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The result of the delay was the very strong entrenching of the gap that made the soldiers of the allies, remembering Lille and Tournai, exclaim that they were obliged again to make war on "moles." The battle was like an attack on a counterscarp.

It began as soon as the mist allowed the artillerymen to get their range. The Prince of Orange on the left led his Dutchmen and Highlanders, and the Prince of Hesse-Carrel his cavalry, against the French right in the wood of Laniere. Schulemberg and Lottum (Lottum with a few English) led the right against two sides of the wood of Taisniere which meet at a right angle. For on our right, and actually on the French side of the forest, coming from the St. Ghislain road, General Withers was to attack the French left and rear. Thus the right was very strong, as the French left opposed to it was comparatively weak. In the centre the allies had artillery facing down the gap to the enemy's entrenchments, and behind it Lord Orkney with the English.

In the French centre, too, were the Irish brigades. At first the attack came only from the strong left and right and from the artillery of the centre. Marlborough and Eugene were both with the troops attacking on the right. Villars was with the French defending the salient angle. The attacks were very slow to make an impression. They were stopped and thrown back several times. But in an hour or two the battle was being fought amongst the trees, for Marlborough and Lottum's infantry had slipped round the end of the French entrenchment, and the attack on the other side being pressed on, the enemy had to give way. The wood was thick with smoke and the dust of earth and

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of bark. The bullets flew so thick that a young soldier wondered how anyone escaped them. The bark dust got in behind the stays of Christian Davies, who had a bottle of beer for her husband and was seeking him with her dog. Lord Orkney moved up to keep touch with the advancing right, but still out of reach of the artillery.

On their left the Dutch and Highlanders had no such success. There was no weak salient for them to take advantage of. Instead, they were fighting inside the angle between the defences of the gap and those along the edge of the wood of Lanière. They could force the breastwork, but then in turn the French defenders stopped them, pursued them out, and captured their guns. Marlborough in person could now do nothing at this point. He withdrew the survivors to a point out of range where they might still confine the enemy to their trenches. At the same time, he sent Orkney against the trenches of the gap. The French centre there had been weakened to save the left from the combined pressure of Schulemberg, Lottum and Withers, which Villars himself was opposing with bayonet charges. Orkney swiftly succeeded. His infantry surged over and occupied the entrenchments. His cavalry came up and passed through the gaps between the redans. Even the allied artillery was brought on to the French side of the lines, but not before the cavalry had been broken into by the French horse, which stood ready and untouched in the rear. They were charged and they countercharged. The artillery fired into them, but fresh cavalry charged again, only to be countercharged. The retreating French infantry had time to restore its ranks: the victorious allies had equal need of



Malplaquet, although a great English victory, was deemed by the French to have re-established the honour of their flag.

Malplaquet
By Caran D'Ache

To face p. 208.

Malplaquet

doing so when they emerged from the wood. But nothing could be done. The losers could not renew the battle, nor the winners pursue it. Probably the allies' artillery, with that captured from the French, and the triumphant fresh infantry of Orkney, compelled the enemy to move farther and farther away from their position, while the cavalry scrimmages may have ended with the French somewhat at an advantage. Though "Jimmy Campbell, at the head of the grey dragoons, behaved like an angel," there was much give and take, and had it not been for the foot the French "might have driven our horse out of the field."* They moved off quite unmolested, leaving fourteen thousand killed and wounded. The allies lost twenty thousand. All was over early in the afternoon. By ten o'clock at night it was known at Brussels that the French were defeated. Ostend knew it by express at seven next evening. The *London Gazette* printed the news on September 14th.

Where the Dutch guards attacked in the morning the dead lay so thick "it is a miracle," said Orkney, who hoped in God it would be the last battle he might ever see.† The oldest general living never saw such butchering. Most generals had three, four or five horses shot under them; his own horse, by luck, was struck only on the iron buckles. Eugene was wounded, and Villars so badly that he directed the battle from a chair, till he fainted and was replaced by Boufflers. The French, said Marlborough, defended better than he had ever seen them. "The lamentable sight and thoughts" of the slaughter, the losing so many brave men whom he had lived with eight

* "English Hist. Review," 1904.

† *Ibid*, 1904.

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years, upset him. His head ached, he was feverish. He was too tired to say more than that the battle had been very bloody, and that he thought "if the Dutch please" the allies could now have what peace they liked. It is what he always said. If he thought it hardly anyone else did. The French called it a glorious defeat. Villars himself said that if God gave the French another such defeat, the King might consider his enemies destroyed.

On September 25th Mons was invested. It held out for a month before being taken, and the army went into winter quarters. The commanders went to the Hague. With a heavy heart Marlborough returned home early in November. He was grieved, he said, to go to England where his services to the Dutch Republic would be turned to his disgrace. The future cannot have been altogether hid from him. Everything, he knew, depended on his military success, if indeed even that could save it; and he knew that Malplaquet was not what he said it was when he was newly elated by the victory—it had not crushed the enemy, it could not lead to peace. Nor had the allied armies elsewhere had any valid success. That he wished for peace now is almost certain. He hesitated only because he knew it could not be a peace of his own choosing. Perhaps he was softening when he took notice of the misery of the poor French people about Tournay, arguing from it that Louis must end the war; and when he begged the Duchess to be "obliging and kind" to all friends.

All through the campaign of Malplaquet, as usual, he was being troubled with politics. Once more he had to write a letter, with the Duchess

Malplaquet

and Godolphin looking over his shoulder, to ask the Queen to appoint Orford, whom he did not like, at the head of the Admiralty. Thus he pleased the Whigs and still further exasperated Anne and her Tories. The Duchess also did her worst, by still attempting to obtain favours from the Queen, by reminding her of old services, by vilifying Mrs. Masham. Harley and his peace policy became more and more attractive to Anne, and consequently to those who looked forward to the Duke's fall and to obtaining places after it.

In his distress the Duke was consistent only in wishing to retain his position. At times he was high-handed. Thus he asked to be made Captain-General for life, which his friend the Lord Chancellor pronounced at once to be unconstitutional : his bad grace when the Queen refused seems to confirm the suspicion roused by the extravagance of the request. At other times he consented to ask for a crown and accept sixpence. When the Queen asked him to appoint Mrs. Masham's brother—Hill—to a vacant regiment he took the opinion of the Whigs, found it on his side, and made strong objections to Anne. The Queen not giving way, Marlborough left London. He was absent and not missed from a Cabinet Council. His intention had been to take a strong line. He even wrote to the Queen hoping that she would dismiss Mrs. Masham or himself, and he had the Whigs upon his side. Somers had two interviews with the Queen on the Duke's behalf, and at the second she came down so far as to say that if the Duke came to see her she would convince him of her entire friendship. Somers and Godolphin, too, advised him to accept this. But he did not know what to do. He asked them,

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therefore, to meet and talk it over, and whatever they decided on he would do. Instead of repeating his ultimatum he wrote a letter to Anne, referring to his many mortifications, begging her to reflect what people must think of her thus treating him who had served her so well, and all to oblige a bedchamber woman,—yet assuring her that in his retirement he should pray for her prosperity and that her next faithful servants should never meet with so hard a return. The Whigs showed her how important the occasion was. So at last she told Godolphin that she had considered what Somers said, and she would not insist on Colonel Hill's appointment. And Marlborough accepted this as the end of the matter.

Godolphin, at the same time, did a foolish thing which helped to concentrate the Church of England party against him and the Ministry. He took notice of a foolish sermon by one Dr. Sacheverell in which he was pointed at as a man of no principles, a wily "Volpone." This clergyman, Sacheverell, talked like a Jacobite. For him "the grand security of our government and the very pillar on which it stands is founded upon the steady belief of the subjects' obligations to an absolute and unconditional obedience to the supreme power in all things lawful, and the utter illegality of resistance upon any pretence whatever." His dread was that a prince should be just the breath of his subjects' nostrils, "to be blown in and out at their caprice and pleasure." It was his own privilege to become the breath of the Church's nostrils for a time. His portrait was to be found in all "magnitudes and dimensions" on lady's snuff-boxes, handkerchiefs, fans, etc.*

* *Spectator*, No. 57.

Malplaquet

And all because Godolphin would have him impeached and so advertised. The lady in the *Spectator* asked Will Honeycomb if he was for the Doctor, and the crowd about Queen Anne going to the trial cried : “ God bless your Majesty and the Church. We hope your Majesty is for Dr. Sacheverell.” He was found guilty of high crimes and misdemeanours by a majority of seventeen. The sentence for suspending him for three months from preaching was carried only by six, while the attempt to incapacitate him during that time from taking dignity or preferment in the Church was lost. There were feasts, bonfires, bell-ringsings, processions, and addresses, as if he had been a conqueror. A twopenny broadside was printed with his portrait in the middle, surrounded by an alphabetical list of the Lords and Commons who were for him. Marlborough congratulated Godolphin on getting his man condemned, but remained for the rest indifferent. He would never have had Sacheverell impeached. For he was proud but he was not vindictive.

XX : SIEGES

MARLBOROUGH was safe out of England in March, 1710, when Godolphin sent the result of Sacheverell's trial. A Congress at Gertruydenberg was to discuss peace, and he and Townshend represented England. The Dutch protested against the severity of the terms demanded by the allies, and the English also were willing to let Philip have Sicily instead of Spain. In the December of this winter, Marlborough had told Heinsius privately that he thought it unreasonable to press the French "to do so treacherous a thing as deliver towns in Spain," but he said also that if Holland would continue the war three years more the French proposals might be rejected and the allies could "with the blessing of God," impose any terms they liked. But in public, he added, he durst not be of any other opinion than he had expressed to Townshend. Whichever of the two views we prefer to think was Marlborough's, the Hapsburgs stood out. They would not give up any part of the Spanish dominions. Louis did not pretend that he could turn Philip out; but his Allies insisted that he should. There was no peace to be had this spring.

Never had Marlborough gone into the field, he said, "with so heavy a heart." He could not see how things should mend without first getting worse. Yet he had a large scheme to attempt, to



Tournay
After Van der Meulen

Sieges

take Douai and Arras, and, in combination with the fleet, Calais and Abbeville, and so to Paris. He and Eugene met at Tournai in the middle of April and led their army in two columns over the lines of La Bassee to Lens. The weak force defending the lines had fallen back almost without a blow. The allies laid siege to Douai, and spread out their main army behind a long line between Douai and Arras, while Villars strengthened the lines protecting Arras with an army of ninety, or as he put it, a hundred and sixty, thousand. Marlborough believed that, allowing for the sickness among their foot, he had as many men as the French, though he did speak a week later of their great superiority in numbers. At one time Villars came up to the allied position near Vitry to give battle. But the position was impregnable. Marlborough pronounced that there could be no action unless they did "contrary to reason." His dread was greater of sickness. Most of the country people, he reported, were sick and crowded into the churches, and the towns had a spotted fever. Villars, independently, said at the same time that to attack a superior enemy so entrenched would be contrary to all reason, and he retired. At the end of June Douai surrendered. Arras had next to be attacked, but first the new lines from Arras towards the Somme, and they proved impassable, so that the allies turned aside to besiege Bethune. Villars followed them out to the position between Mont St. Eloi and Houdain, higher up the straight road pointing to Calais. Marlborough thought that a battle was at hand, made his dispositions, and drew in reinforcements from the besieging army at Bethune. But he was mistaken. Villars was at mole's work again, making another line of

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entrenchments. Bethune, therefore, fell. St. Venant and Aire were next invested, in the direction of Calais, and here Marlborough's first misfortune "during these nine years" befell him: his convoy of powder and other stores coming from Menin was captured. St. Venant was taken, but Aire held out in very wet weather. The men, up to their knees in mud and water, were a grievous sight to the Duke, and he knew that sickness would come of it; yet the place must be taken, if only because the cannon could not be drawn from the batteries in this state of the ground. Seven thousand men were lost at Aire before it fell in the middle of November. And here ended the campaign, without any of that success which could encourage his hopes of rest or his resolve not to be "over-solicitous" about the constructions put on his actions by his enemies.

All through the campaign he had been hearing the worst political news possible from home, and had suffered not only the inevitable moral loss, but, towards the end, an actual curtailment of his power, so that when, putting the men into winter quarters, he asked for the Queen's confirmation of his dispositions, "as it is grown too much the fashion to canvas and reflect on what I do, without any consideration of the service," the Queen, without consulting him, had given Lord Argyle leave to go home. She had also given military promotion on her own authority to friends whom he neglected.

The Duchess had, as usual, done her part. She herself wished formally to retire from the Queen's service, but to preserve from the enemy the advantages of it; she had the boldness to think her daughters might have them, and as she could

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not ask herself, she persuaded the Duke to do so. The Duke believed that he had gained the point in an interview. The Duchess found that he had not, and made repeated attempts to see the Queen on the matter. At last, thrusting herself in to open her mind, she was met with a request to put it in writing. She began a general assault, accusing her enemies of accusing her of speaking ill of the Queen.

Harley, still under the surface, had gained ground. Through him the Duke of Shrewsbury came into the Cabinet as Lord Chamberlain, whom Godolphin protested against in vain as certain to cause all the ministers to run as if from the plague. Among the consequences Godolphin foretold a peace favourable to France and a possible return of the Pretender. He did not resign because he did not take decided steps, and because he had to finance Marlborough's army. Whether by the force of Shrewsbury's ingratiating affability or not, he afterwards came to think that perhaps the intruder would "live well with us three." Not long afterwards he declared that Shrewsbury alone of the new set had delayed the dismissal of Lord Sunderland. Marlborough, when he heard the news about Shrewsbury, hoped that the Whigs would hold together. He did more; he asked favours of Shrewsbury, asked him to help to get a Garter for Lord Orford, and was refused. How far he would go, to keep as well as possible with the Queen, may be seen in his falling in at last with the Queen's desire to make Colonel Hill a general. In the matter of Lord Sunderland, too, he approached Shrewsbury, announced that if his son-in-law were dismissed he himself could no longer serve, and asked for his good offices. He also

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wrote a letter, practically drafted for him by Godolphin, which the Queen was to see, speaking of his services and his mortification. Lord Sunderland, he said, was singled out purely as his son-in-law. He did not remember how unwilling he had been to help Sunderland into office in the first place, nor how plainly Anne had spoken of his temper as incompatible with hers. Now, when she dismissed Sunderland she made a point of saying that she had no thoughts of doing without Marlborough, and the Whigs drew up a memorial asking him not to think of resigning. He did not resign. To Shrewsbury he wrote a letter saying that he was convinced the Queen had not meant him personally an unkindness in dismissing his son-in-law, but mentioning the fact that Argyle and others gossiped of it as a step towards his own fall. Of the approaching fall he must have been all but certain, not quite so because it was too painful to be credible, and because the tangle and the mixture of motives was so great. Moreover, the rising party was anxious to make use of him up to the last moment. When Sunderland's dismissal was announced to Holland it was with an explanation that it did not mean a loss of credit to Marlborough. Yet it was to the Hague, and as joint plenipotentiary with him, that Halifax, whom he had long kept out, was appointed. There were reasons, too, for suspecting that the command of the army was to be offered to the Elector of Hanover.

As usual, Marlborough showed his distress in two apparently different ways. To the Duchess he said that he would go on with the war so that his conscience would not reproach him, and as for his enemies he "in a great degree" contemned

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them and was resolved to "suffer for the good of his country." To Godolphin he owned his weakness at bearing mortification: it was all that he could do not to be ill. In another letter he speaks of dreading the noise of the cannon and small shot at the siege of Bethune.

He was soon to lose Godolphin. Neither the Whigs nor the Tories nor the Queen liked Godolphin, but he was Marlborough's one intimate. He admired and understood the Duke, and used to say that he always knew when to expect great news because the Duke's last letter, though vague, was in high spirits.* Of all the ministers the Duke could count only on him to the very end. But now he quarrelled at a Cabinet Meeting with Shrewsbury; even to the Queen, who was present, he said something which she resented. Feeling that there was a threat hanging, he asked her if she wished him to go on, and she said yes. That evening she wrote to him telling him that his "uneasiness" and "unkind returns" made it impossible for her to keep him in her service. She asked him to break the staff of office instead of bringing it, which would be "easier to us both." To the Duke she made the announcement with the remark that she would take care the army wanted nothing. Godolphin himself wrote a letter showing that he thought Marlborough ought to resign. His secretary at war, Adam Cardonnel, was dismissed. Harley became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Somers, Wharton, Orford, and others resigned. St. John and the Duke of Ormond were among the Tories who replaced them. The works at Blenheim Palace, still uncompleted, were

* "John and Sarah, Duke and Duchess of Marlborough," by Stuart J. Reid.

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stopped. When the Duke applied for the governorship of the Netherlands which had been offered to him, he was told that perhaps he might have it, if the Dutch agreed. He was undermined, and a French minister said that what the French lost in Flanders they would gain in England.

In making overtures to the Duke the Tories did what must have been as insincere as it was unnecessary, since he was of no use unless he could have his own way and that was not theirs. He was to abandon the Whigs and their policy and restrain the Duchess, or he might be impeached. Such were the conditions. His reply that he was of no party but the Queen's did not wholly satisfy the Whigs or the Duchess or Godolphin.

That he called the English a "villainous people" at this time is not surprising. On his arrival at the end of 1710 the Queen asked him not to allow a vote of thanks to be moved to him in Parliament, because her ministers would oppose it. The ministers themselves, Shrewsbury, Harley, St. John, tried to show him how well he might do yet if he "got rid of his wife," and forgot the past; for "if he looked back to make complaints he would have more retorted upon him than it was possible to answer." From St. John's account it is pretty certain that he did hesitate, but could not conceal either his anger at Argyle's appointment or his desire to have his old absolute power. In consenting to remain at the head of the army he had a sort of belief that he was retaining a great part of that power. The ministers, it is plain, would support him in his command only for their purposes and for a time. His health was bad. The Duchess thought he suffered chiefly on account of her coming fall, and wrote a letter

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expressing her regret and attacking the Queen's tenderness by saying she feared the Duke would not live six months if the cause of his suffering was not removed. The Duke himself delivered the letter. After he had tried to persuade her not to dismiss the Duchess he asked, on his knees, for ten days' grace, whereupon she reduced it to two. But he did not resign. He could not himself take the step down, though he knew well that he must soon be pushed down. The Duchess was dismissed, and ordered the locks and marble chimney-pieces of her lodgings to be removed, though the Duke begged her not to. That was by letter. His last campaign had begun.

XXI : THE LAST CAMPAIGN

SUPPLIES for the campaign had been voted as usual, and now that he was a servant and not a master he was flattered (as a servant) in the party journal. Now it was said that his courage, conduct, and success had never been disputed ; “ the Nation only wished to see him taken out of ill hands, and put into better.”* If the party could win his good will, so much the better for them, for they were in a risky position, “ like an isthmus between the Whigs on one side, and the violent Tories on the other,”† and needed all available prestige. Whigs and Tories squabbled over him. The Whigs said he would serve no more, because they wished him not to. The Tories hoped he would. But he himself felt chiefly their blows, “ especially by the villainous way of printing, which stabs me to the heart.” He was weakened, too, by Eugene and his troops withdrawing when Charles, *soi-disant* King of Spain, succeeded his brother Joseph as Emperor. Things looked ill, and Marlborough despaired of success. The warfare was to be of the same kind as in 1710, tedious to the men and leading to no substantial or brilliant advantage. For the French had spent the winter in making a long line of entrenchments behind rivers, canals, and inundations, to protect their frontier from Namur to the sea. May was

* Swift. Examiner. No. 29.

† Journal to Stella.

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wet. Since constant success had not met with approbation, he reflected, what was he to expect when nothing was done? And he had a giddiness and swimming in his head, with sickness. Villars had orders to avoid an engagement. Marlborough feared a disaster because it must finally tip over his position at home. There was plenty of time, therefore, to think about that position.

First he approached the lines, then he withdrew towards Lens, followed by Villars, with a show of desiring battle which flickered out in skirmishes. At last, in July, he began the movements by which at last he penetrated the lines, the impenetrable, "Ne plus ultra," lines. There were two ways between Arras and Bouchain by which the inundations could be passed and the lines entered, and one was at Arleux. A fort, of course, protected it. Marlborough took this fort and greatly strengthened it in order to make Villars think he valued it. Villars recaptured it, as it was intended he should, and by this, and by an almost successful attack on Douai, he was much elated. And he destroyed its fortifications. This also was what was expected of him, but Marlborough affected to be upset by it, to be annoyed, to the extent of vowing to penetrate the lines by storming if necessary. His own army thought this was his intention, mad as it was. They marched west as far as St. Pol and Houdain. They were drawn up against the lines and the enemy concentrated opposite them. Both sides expected an encounter. Marlborough rode along the lines pointing with his cane and explaining his designs, with a confidence which astonished everyone and made them think him desperate, considering the impossibility of the task. One who was in the army as it lay in standing wheat, eighty

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paces from the entrenchments, saw the Duke come up and stand a little to one side where he had a fair view of the works. Nothing, said the man, ever gave him more pleasure than seeing Marlborough there those five or six minutes, though he was anxious too, seeing the enemy's cannon pointed on the general and the trenches thick with men.* But at night they moved off in silence back to the east. Already Cadogan had gone ahead to warn the detachment at Douai, and while the army was still marching came the news from him that he had entered the lines at three in the morning at Arleux. Thirteen hours later the main army lay there within the lines. Thirteen leagues they had marched in eighteen hours, with Villars hastening parallel to them so that some fainted and died, and some of the foot did not come up for two days. Villars himself, rushing up with a handful of cavalry that had survived his haste, was all but captured.

But Marlborough was not strong enough to take Arras or to risk a battle at Cambrai, and turning round by Cambrai and over the Scheldt, without molestation, he invested Bouchain. August passed. Villars, with a superior army, was powerless to relieve the town. Early in September the garrison of Bouchain surrendered, prisoners of war. Marlborough had intended then to take Quesnoy in the east, and far behind the lines which the loss of it would make useless to the French. But he was prevented by the ripening of the Government's secret negotiation with France. By a series of "bamboozling" letters Harley, now Lord Oxford, had told him enough of what was being done to tie his hands. On September 27th the preliminaries

* Richard Kane.

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of a treaty were signed between France and England, as if no promise had ever been made by all the allies that none should enter into separate negotiations with the enemy. Marlborough was left. He was, he said, really at a loss what part to take. Of course, he said, he was not curious about the treaty but it would—and he confessed it to Oxford—be a terrible mortification to him to pass by the Hague, with the plenipotentiaries there, and himself a stranger to the transactions. There were no hopes for him at home if he was not thought fit to be trusted abroad. If the Dutch had not very naturally and swiftly refused to do their part for the army, he could have passed the winter on the frontier. Also he had an apology or explanation to make. Oxford must not suppose that anyone promoting the continuance of the war was uttering his sentiments.

What he referred to was a sermon, preached before him after taking Bouchain, and now published as a pamphlet, by his own chaplain, Francis Hare.

The use to be made of this success, said Hare, was not to be faint and weary as men without hope, not to leave imperfect the great work which God had so visibly declared himself the patron of, but to be strong in the Lord and persevere in this just and necessary war, till such a peace should be obtained as the Duke's victories would assuredly and must end in if they could be content to wait the leisure of the Lord. If, he said, the common enemy was still so strong that they despaired of reducing him to reason, how much stronger he must have been before all the Duke's victories! and what a condition they would have been in by now! He urged them to have patience, to go on cheerfully,

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wait God's leisure, and then nothing could disappoint their hopes but what it was in their power to prevent, nothing but their own ingratitude and impenitence.

As Hare was loyal to the Duke to the point of panegyric, I assume that the sermon pleased Marlborough, as it was meant to do, when it was delivered. That he was really displeased by its publication is possible. It is likelier that he would have been content to profit by it and yet disclaim its inspiration. But it was far too late for anything to profit him, though even in July there had been a whisper of an understanding between Harley and the Whigs, a reed stout enough for Marlborough to grasp at.

As early as April, England had begun to treat with France, and Marlborough was particularly excluded. When Heinsius heard of the treaty he was told that the Duke knew nothing of it from England, and would presumably learn nothing of it from Holland. The object was peace at practically any price. The war was costly, the difficulty of managing the allies and their various contributions of men and money was great, and could not be overcome except by Marlborough, and no end was visible. People were tired of the war, and in any case a new ministry, and that mainly a Tory one, could not expect to produce a stronger war policy than Marlborough's. And, as St. John, or rather Lord Bolingbroke, said: "Bouchain may be said properly and truly to have cost our nation very near £7,000,000."* He said also that the war had at least taught them that the French were not to be feared.

Nor was this negotiation the only offence offered

* Bolingbroke, "On the Study of History."

RESOLUTIONS Without Doors,
 UPON THE
 RESOLUTIONS Within Doors,
 In the VOTES of the H— of C—
Martis 5 die Febr. 1711.

Resolved,
THAT no Nation, no, not a petty Conquer'd
 Province, was ever treated with more Contempt,
 or more infamously Bubbld and Abus'd, than
Great-Britain has been by its Al—s. especially the
 D—b.

Resolved,
 That such abominable Corruptions cannot be paral-
 lell'd in any History, from the Creation of the World,
 to this Day.

Resolved,
 That those of *Great-Britain*, who acted those Corrup-
 tions, or even suffer'd them, when it was in their Power
 to prevent them, are Tr—rs to their Q—,
 Betr—rs and Sellers of their C—try; and ought to
 be H—g'd, Dr—n, and Qu—r'd, as such.

Resolved,
 That an Humble Ad—fs from the Gentlemen
Without Doors be Presented to the Gentlemen *Within*
Doors, Desiring them to bring in a B—ll for the more
 easie Recovery of Money which the Publick has been
 Robb'd of; and for the Preventing of such Robberies for
 the future.

Resolved,
 That the H— of C— which Discovers and
 Exposes these Plundrings of the Publick, is the Best
 H— of C— that ever sare in *Great-Britain*;
 And that these Loyal Subjects and Worthy Patriots, de-
 serve to be (as They actually are) the Darling of their
 Qu— and Country.

Reproduction of Broadside

Feb. 5, 1711

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to Marlborough by the new ministry. They attacked the late ministry, and Godolphin in particular, for misappropriating public money, leaving thirty millions unaccounted for. After its effect, the charge turned out to be either false or rhetorical ; the real facts could not be objected to by any politician who accepted the custom of the age—that is to say, by any minister or ex-minister. Similar charges were brought against Marlborough and his secretary, Cardonnel. Two and a half per cent. of the money voted by Parliament for paying foreign mercenaries, nearly £300,000, was returned to the Commander-in-Chief by the rulers who sent them. He had also received sums of money amounting to £63,000 in four years from the Jewish contractor who supplied bread to the forces. On each contract, Cardonnel took a gratuity of 500 ducats. These offences also were proved to be no offences against custom. The money was the general's perquisite which he spent, he said himself, " in keeping secret correspondence, and getting intelligence of the enemy's motions and designs." But Cardonnel lost his seat in the House of Commons and the publicity had its effect. In the year before, Swift had entertained readers of the *Examiner* with some account of the rewards for Marlborough's services, " to convince the world that we are not quite so ungrateful either as the Greeks or the Romans." He was, in fact, one of the richest of men, one of those who offered to lend to the Bank of England when fear of the Pretender was draining it in 1708. Now every Casca with a pen put forth his broadside, calling the Duke Midas, for example :

And Midas now neglected stands
With asses' ears and dirty hands.

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It was this charge which was made the excuse for dismissing the Duke.

For a moment at the end of the year there seemed a possibility that the Whigs would unite with the Tories not in office against the ministry. Whigs were willing to vote for an Occasional Conformity Bill, Tories to insist on preserving Spain from the Bourbons, if only they could defeat Oxford. The Dutch and the Emperor joined the confederacy, because Oxford's kind of peace was not theirs. The Elector of Hanover's minister, too, tried to insist that the allies should "require not only positive declarations but real securities" from France, lest the treaty should leave her an opening for "her usual chicanes." This memorial had the approval of Marlborough as well as the Whigs. That he had hopes still is plain, then. Swift had it from Mrs. Masham that he told a hundred lies to his friends of what she said to him, and that he was "one day humble, and the next day on the high ropes."* When Parliament met in December, 1711, this policy all but triumphed. The speech from the throne alluded with satisfaction to the opening of a treaty for a general peace, "notwithstanding the arts of those who delight in war," and in the debate Marlborough was obviously aimed at in a phrase referring to "the arts and designs of those who, for private reasons, might delight in war." Marlborough replied. Before the Queen, the Lords, and "God Himself, who is infinitely superior to all the powers of the earth, and before whom, by the ordinary course of nature, I shall soon appear, to render account of my actions," he declared that he had desired a safe, honourable, and lasting

* Journal to Stella, Dec. 6, 1711.

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peace. On the other hand, he did not acquiesce in the intention of leaving Spain and the West Indies to the Bourbons. This view had a majority which was counteracted by the creation of twelve Tory Peers in a bunch. But the speech destroyed Marlborough. The ministers proceeded with the charges against him. Rumours ran abroad. Hardly anyone at Court noticed him on December 30th.* On December 31st, the Queen dismissed him from all his employments that the matter might undergo an impartial investigation. With the dignity, rather overpowered by pathos, that he could always command, he wrote a reply, ending thus :

“ I am much more concerned at an expression in your Majesty’s letter, which seems to complain of the treatment you had met with. I know not how to understand that word, nor what construction to make of it. I know I have endeavoured to serve your Majesty faithfully and zealously through a great many undeserved mortifications. But if your Majesty does intend, by that expression, to find fault with my not coming to the Cabinet Council, I am very free to acknowledge that my duty to your Majesty and country would not give me leave to join in the counsel of a man who, in my opinion, puts your Majesty upon all manner of extremities. And it is not my opinion only, but the opinion of all mankind, that the friendship of France must needs be destructive to your Majesty, there being in that Court a root of enmity irreconcilable to your Majesty’s government and the religion of these kingdoms. I wish your Majesty may never find the want of so

* Journal to Stella, Dec. 6, 1711.

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faithful a servant as I have always endeavoured to approve myself to you."

He threw the Queen's letter into the fire.

Marlborough's enemies were delighted. Louis XIV said that the dismissal of the Duke would do all that they desired. One scribbler rhymed, "The History of the Three Goddesses and the Golden Apple of Prince Paris and Prince Avaro," who

Turned bread to gold, which is his God.

There is an allusion to Hare's sermon at Bouchain in these lines :

Had Paris' head been so well turned
Troytown in flames had never burned.
Old Troy might then a general vaunt
As great as one in Troynovant,
Whose love for war renewed appears
At the end of more than twice ten years ;
While mitred priests to his assistance
Preach up a war and more resistance.

A piece called "The Loyal Trimmer" contains the verse :

From heroes whose honour immortal is fled,
From starving poor soldiers, curtailing their
bread,
Which was certainly done, there's no more to
be said :

Libera nos, Domine.

To the tune of "I laugh at the Pope's Devices" some one sang :

Sing praise to our gracious Queen Anne,
Who quietly sits on her throne,
Having well got rid of a clan
That too saucily wise were grown.

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There is a rhyme of a shepherd and his dog that fell into disgrace :

How, few can tell.

Some say he had regard for pelf
And pilfered mutton for himself.

But another rhyme, called " Truth in Disguise, or the Lady and her Huntsman," takes the other view. The Lady's lambs were stolen by wolves, and the shepherd cried :

O, send for Huntsman John.

He killed the wolves, but

For every head a crown was paid,
Which vexed the new steward Robin,
And Abigail, the chamber-maid,
With whom this Robin often played
The game of Hey Gee Dobbin.

The Duke was labelled coward—incompetent—a dictator like Cromwell.

But the truth and nothing but the truth was written on the matter by Swift on January 1st, when he told Stella that Anne and Oxford mortally hated Marlborough, and that was the reason of his fall, unless he had been " tampering with his party." He thought the Duke had no good quality but as a general. Even that he had heard denied, but undoubtedly the French thought it impossible to beat an army led by the Duke, and " our soldiers think the same." How far his fall might encourage the French to " play tricks with us " no one knew. He—who had often attacked the Duke, who finding that Lady Godolphin, the Duke's eldest daughter, would not be acquainted with him or give him a word, said " I'll pull her

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down ”*—yet professed that he did not like to see personal resentment mix with public affairs,† and questioned whether a wise state ever laid aside so successful a general.‡ And after all, the Commons decided that the two and a half per cent. should still be deducted from the mercenaries’ pay, but applied to the public service, and nobody complained when some of the princes preferred to give the money direct to Ormond, the new Commander-in-Chief, and he accepted it.

* Journal to Stella, March 2, 1713.

† *Ibid*, Jan. 1, 1712.

‡ *Ibid*, Jan. 7, 1712.

XXII : IN DISGRACE

NEITHER the campaign nor the negotiations of 1712 can have given Marlborough any satisfaction except that of seeing his adversaries behaving ill. The Duke of Ormond was a general of straw. For a time his part was to pretend to be co-operating with Eugene, yet to give no offence to Villars by opposing him. When at last his instructions came for a cessation of arms with France, he had to turn back with as many of his mercenaries as would obey his orders. As they marched away, they and their former companions in arms looked very dejectedly on each other, but in silence ; for they were not permitted to speak on " the strange revolution between us and our allies." The English soldiers were furious, their officers wretched, at this humiliation in the eyes of enemies whom they had always beaten and friends whom they could not have done without in the time of victory. As to Ormond, the experience might have made him the Jacobite he proved himself.

The Ministry having to provide a change of diet to the nation could, of course, only offer peace, peace in a hurry and at almost any price, therefore perhaps not so good a one as could have been won at the sword's point, and certainly one far from the idyllic safe, honourable and lasting one which all sorts of men talked about. Early in 1711 Swift had said that the only thing to save

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his party was a peace, and he was certain they could not have such a one as they had hoped for, or as the Whigs would "bawl" that they would have got had they remained.* Now, with the Duke against them, the French, elated by a year of nothings and the prospect of better, the Emperor and the Dutch already roused by the English betrayal and their consequent defeat, the Ministry could get nothing but just a plain peace. In return for Dunkirk they consented to remove Ormond from the side of the allies in the middle of the campaign. They were attacked for it in the House of Lords. One of their side, in retorting, dragged in Marlborough and accused him of leading troops to the slaughter in order to sell the officers' commissions. To which the Duke replied by calling the man out to a duel. The Queen intervened, and the enemy had the advantage of being able to accuse him of bringing in a custom of party duels. At length, in June, the negotiations that had been going on in darkness were partly revealed in Parliament. Philip of Anjou was to keep Spain, but never to succeed to the French crown. England was to keep Gibraltar and Minorca and have Dunkirk demolished. The Netherlands were to go to Austria, but the Dutch were to have fortresses enough to make a barrier against France. The Rhine was to be the boundary of the Empire. With these terms the Commons were satisfied, and the Lords could not even carry an amendment recommending that the allies should be persuaded to guarantee the Protestant succession. An attempt was made to gain the consent of the allies to these terms; it failed without affecting the treaty already so far incubated. The Dutch had to fall

* Journal to Stella, Jan. 7, 1711.

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in at the last moment. The Emperor held out another year. Thus ended the Grand Alliance. In the following March, 1713, England and France signed the Peace of Utrecht. The Bourbon, Philip V, kept Spain and the Indies, but the crowns of France and Spain were never to be united. Louis XIV promised to respect the Protestant succession, to demolish Dunkirk, not to help the Pretender. England gained Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, the Hudson's Bay territory, and the right which France had had to import 4,800 slaves into the Indies within thirty years; her position in the Mediterranean was secured by the possession of Gibraltar and Minorca. The Dutch kept a few of the fortresses taken during the war, and the Netherlands being Austrian, served as a barrier against France, so long as Austria was not in alliance with France. And among the many ill consequences of the treaty "it was within a point of giving my Uncle Toby a surfeit of sieges."*

Such terms, or better, might have been had in the year of Ramillies. Nothing had been gained by the six years of war following; nor probably could anything have been gained by another six years, even had Marlborough kept his health and succeeded as well as ever in using, more or less as if they were one crown and one army, his various scattered allies and their forces. Swift accepted as a compliment the Spanish Ambassador's remark that he, more than any man in Europe, had put Louis XIV and the King of Spain under an obligation. And being an easy, it was also an enduring, peace.

Before the signing of the peace the Duke went

* Tristram Shandy.

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abroad. He was being harrassed by the Press and the Government. Blenheim was not finished, and the contentions and delays connected with it cannot have left it many attractions except its name and its size. His health, too, was failing. For ten years he had called himself an old man, and now that he was sixty-two, he was reported to be "growing ill of his diabetes ; which, if it be true, may soon carry him off ; and then the Ministry will be something more at ease."* He was still thought dangerous, and malice or fancy or both had credited him with joining a conspiracy to set fire to London. Among reasons for his going abroad, gossip said that it was consciousness of guilt, and that he would fling odium on the Government for molesting a great general in his retirement.† Even travelling in the Netherlands and Germany he was pursued not only by an applauding populace, but by contractors connected with the building of Blenheim who had not been paid, and ministers who applied to his actions as Commander-in-Chief an exceptional standard borrowed from Utopia, or a remote posterity. He had mustered defective troops and companies as complete and taken the gratuity allowed for complete ones, with the excuse that this gratuity went to make up the recruiting money to something like completeness, but even so did not save the captains' own pockets. As the answer to such a case is always less simple, and to the majority less interesting than the charge, doubtless he lost more than he regained by his refutation. But, except that in 1714 on a report of his death at Antwerp someone wrote him eight pages of epitaph, he suffered less out of England than in it. This alone

* Journal to Stella, Sept. 15, 1712.

† *Ibid*, Oct., 1712.

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might have been one of the reasons which inclined him to leave his country and its "villainous people." The Duchess soon followed him. Godolphin was dead. Another reason was the greater freedom he had in communicating with Hanover. He gave it as his opinion that the ministers meant to bring in the Pretender at Anne's death, and he took the opposite side definitely enough to have been foreshadowed as her Commander-in-Chief by the Electress Sophia, should she come to the throne. Though he knew Anne's dislike of having the Hanoverians in England so long as she lived, he sent to the Court of Hanover to warn them against Oxford's representative there, and to advise the Electoral Prince to proceed to England and take his seat in the House of Lords. The death of Sophia lessened the Duke's position at Hanover ; for the Elector, now supreme there, had thought himself slighted sometimes in the past war, when he served on the Rhine, and was treated as the Margrave of Baden had been before him ; nor was Marlborough, on the strength of his past and of his enemies' recent insinuations, above suspicion as a possible Jacobite. Perhaps the only party that had no hopes of him was the Jacobites. However it was, when Anne died—and he came over at Anne's death—he found he was not (but neither was Somers nor Sunderland) one of the new King's Lords Justices, though the people shouted " Long live King George ! Long live the Duke of Marlborough ! " He made a motion of retiring, but was persuaded to become Captain-General again, and the Duchess Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princess of Wales. Bowing and smiling in the ante chamber, he made almost the same figure as ever. The Duchess, with her

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fine fair hair, which she had preserved in colour by the constant use of honey water, not liking Walpole in the "insolence of new favour" used to make public jokes of the beggary she first knew him in.*

The Duke was to live to be almost seventy-two, and he had the leisure that he had often wished for, though it may be of a different kind. One story goes that he came once to the Cabinet saying that his faculties were not what they had been and he knew it, but he feared lest they should decline further and unawares, so that he begged not to be called again.

Holywell House, near St. Albans, seems to have been his favourite home. He had built it under James. It was of this that he thought abroad. The hot weather of July, 1702, he hoped, would ripen the fruit there. While he was on the way to the Danube in 1704, resting at Weinheim, in sight of the Neckar and the Rhine, of Mannheim and Heidelberg, he told the Duchess that he would be better pleased with the prospect of St. Albans, though it was not famous for seeing far. And later in the campaign he reminded her that she had not sent him the draught of a stable for the lodge, with the remark that as she had set her heart on it he would be glad that it had every convenience. This must have been Windsor Lodge, which she had from Anne, and it was there that he wished to retire with her after the victory of Blenheim when he was so lean that he feared consumption. But if St. Albans touched his heart, Blenheim became a great idea with him. Building, said the Duchess, was his greatest weakness. She had wanted a house to live in ; he

* Lady Mary Wortley Montague.

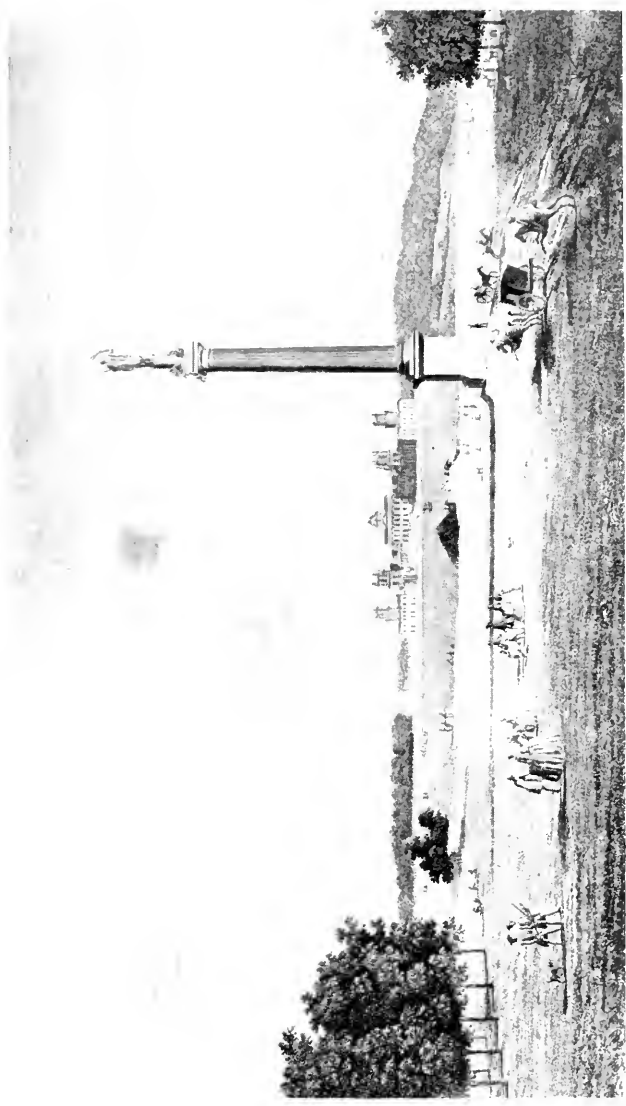
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thought of it as a monument, but when in 1710 nearly a quarter of a million had been spent on it out of the Civil List, she persuaded him to overcome his "passion." It was left still far from completion in that year, resumed in 1711, but left more decidedly in 1712 by the Queen's command after she had dismissed him from his offices. In 1715 a further small sum was voted towards paying the creditors, who were troubling Vanbrugh, the architect. He and Vanbrugh were both sued by two creditors in 1718 ; but the case was unsettled at his death. The house was only completed in 1724, by the Duchess, not Vanbrugh, with whom she had quarrelled, and the last payments to the architect were not got out of her until a year later.

All through the long years of building, Marlborough used to send enquiries or instructions about the palace. He looked forward to seeing the new plantations in 1705, and some day to living there with the Duchess. When he fancied there would be a peace in 1706 he begged her to do all she could to see that the building was carried on that he might have a prospect of living in it. The Duke of Shrewsbury had been there, and sent him an account of it which made him regret he never saw it except in winter. But these hopes of living in it in 1707 were, he confessed, idle dreams. When it was half built, he said in that year it would be enough for the two of them. With her he said he would live in a cottage. The news of the gardens and plantations in the wet season pleased him, though it was a better season for gardens than buildings. It was the third year of the trees, and he wished her to "taste the fruit of each one" so that the poor ones might be changed. But to have to wait three years before the ice house was fit to be

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used was a melancholy prospect for him at fifty-seven. He wanted Sir Godfrey Kneller to paint Anne and the Prince of Denmark to hang in the house, so that he would have nothing in sight but his friends. When he was at Brussels in 1708 he went to see some hangings that were being made for her apartment and his : the Duchess was to provide everything necessary for those rooms ; he was resolved to furnish them with " the finest pictures he could get." If she herself went there, the work indoors would advance the faster. To see it in the summer was his hope, if Vendome would permit him by venturing on another battle. The fine weather in March, 1710, made him anxious that all the hands possible were employed at Blenheim. But in that year his " gold mine " of Blenheim was attacked by the new ministry. They tried to inveigle him into paying the arrears himself, and they granted only enough to cover in and protect what had been done. Vanbrugh, unable to draw his dues, called it a monument of ingratitude. The Duke adopted the phrase to express his own view. Yet he never quarrelled with the house, as Pope did by calling it a house, but not a dwelling. Since he did not see how he could enjoy living in a country where he had so few friends, he would be indifferent. When Oxford spoke of resuming payments for the work in 1711, he mentioned that the debt on the Marlborough family amounted to about four hundred thousand pounds on the Civil List during the Queen's reign. In 1716 the Duchess thought it " nothing like a habitation " yet. But somewhere in it he presumably did spend some time as early as 1712. For in March that year he wrote to Sir Thomas Wheate at Glympton, near Woodstock, about his



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beagles. He thanked Sir Thomas for reminding him of his want of beagles, though he was at a loss where to keep them. He would be glad to know where they were and if the huntsman would keep them till he had a proper place, and on what terms would he do so ?

In 1716 he had a paralytic stroke and lost his speech and his reason for a time. In this attitude he has been most remembered as an old man. The Duchess was said to lead him about in public. His servants were said to have exhibited him, for an extra fee, to people who came to look at Blenheim. But he sat in the House of Lords as late as 1721, and his luck still attending him, under the Duchess's management, he made a hundred thousand pounds out of the South Sea Scheme. He listened to his grand children playing " Tamerlane " and " All for Love " at Blenheim, the amorous speeches having been scratched out, all embraces forbidden, by the Duchess, and a flattering prologue added by a bishop. He played cards, but badly, he said, which made it an expensive amusement. Therefore he preferred to hear singing : it pleased him " mightily without any expense." From the letter in which he says this, and describes a visit to the Prince and Princess of Wales at Richmond in 1720, it is very plain that his old age is not summed up in the line :

From Marlborough's eyes the streams of dotage
flow.

A letter more graceful, cheerful and precise could not be written by a man of seventy. Before he was seventy-two he died at Windsor Lodge and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The choir sang

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“When Saul was King over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel.” The Garter King-of-Arms pronounced at the grave’s edge : “Thus it has pleased Almighty God to take out of this transitory world, into his mercy, the most high, mighty, and noble prince, John, Duke of Marlborough.”

XXIII : LETTERS AND SPEECHES

FOR one of his eminence Marlborough has left behind a very slight impression as a man. He is just a great soldier. Even his fall has done his reputation no good. He fell far, but it is hard to pity one who showed that he would have done anything whatever to save himself.

He survives, then, as a bad man in Macaulay's history, as a mean one in "Esmond," as a mere great man in a thousand lifeless verses and histories. To the eye he is shown clearest perhaps by those words of Evelyn after an interview in February, 1705, the year after Blenheim: "I went to wait on my Lord Treasurer [Godolphin], where was the victorious Duke of Marlborough, who came to me, took me by the hand with extraordinary familiarity and civility, as formerly he used to do, without any alteration of his good nature. He had a most rich George in a sardonyx, set with diamonds of very great value: for the rest very plain. I had not seen him for some years, and believed he might have forgotten me." Evelyn never liked him; yet here he is plainly conquered by Marlborough's grace. The great man had a perfect kindness. You see it in his references to his steward and his dog when they died together in 1710, to the poor people of France as the war drew on, to the Electress of Bavaria when her husband had been beaten at Blenheim, to his

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soldiers in bad weather or after the bloody battle of Malplaquet. You see it in his speech to the guards in 1715 when they had been complaining contemptuously of their "Hanover shirts." "Gentlemen," he said, "I am much concerned to find your complaints so just about the ill state of your clothes. I take this opportunity to tell you that I am wholly innocent of this grievance ; and, depend upon it, no application shall be wanting on my part to trace out the measures that have been taken to abuse you and me. I am resolved nothing shall divert me from demanding forthwith satisfaction (wherever it may happen to fall), and shall think nothing too much on my part for your great services. I have ordered you a new set of clothing, such as will be every way becoming His Majesty's first regiment of foot guards. I desire you will return, then, and take your old, till such time as the new can be completed, which, I give you my word, shall be as soon as possible. I have had the honour to serve with some of you a great many campaigns, and believe you will do me the justice to tell the world that I never willingly wronged any of you ; and if I can be serviceable to any (the least) of you, you may readily command it, and I shall be glad of any opportunity for that purpose. I hope I shall now leave you good subjects to the best of Kings, and every way entirely satisfied."

He added beer, and the men were satisfied.

Apart from a very few contemporaries like Evelyn he is himself his own best chronicler. He wrote a prodigious number of long private letters and official despatches. There is hardly one that does not reveal his moderation, grace and kindness mingled either with ambition or with

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domestic affection. A few examples tell us more about him than Macaulay and Thackeray. The first is a letter to the Duchess in the year of Blenheim, written from the Hague soon after they had parted in some disagreement :

“ Your dear letter of the 15th came to me but this minute. My Lord Treasurer’s letter, in which it was enclosed, by some mistake was sent to Amsterdam. I would not for anything in my power it had been lost ; for it is so very kind, that I would in return lose a thousand lives, if I had them, to make you happy. Before I sat down to write this letter, I took yours that you wrote at Harwich and have burnt it ; and if you will give me leave it will be a great pleasure to me to have it in my power to read this dear, dear letter often, and that it may be found in my strong box when I am dead. I do this minute love you better than ever I did before. This letter of yours has made me so happy that I do from my soul wish we could retire and not be blamed. What you propose as to coming over, I should be extremely pleased with ; for your letter has so transported me that I think you would be happier in being here than where you are, although I should not be able to see you often. But you will see by my last letter, as well as this, that what you desire is impossible, for I am going up into Germany, where it would be impossible for you to follow me ; but love me as you now do, and no hurt can come to me. You have by this kindness preserved my quiet, and I believe my life ; for till I had this letter, I had been very indifferent of what should become of myself. I have pressed this business of carrying an army into Germany, in order to leave a good name behind me, wishing for nothing

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else but good success. I shall now add, that of having a long life and that I may be happy with you."

The second letter is also to the Duchess, in 1706, the year of Ramillies, when she was forcing him to force Sunderland, their son-in-law, upon the Queen: "You know that I have often disputes with you concerning the Queen; and by what I have always showed, when she thinks herself in the right she needs no advice to help her to be very firm and positive. But I doubt but a very little time will set this of Lord Sunderland very right, for you may see by the letter that she has a good opinion of him. I have writ as my friends would have me, for I had much rather be governed than govern. But otherwise I have really so much esteem and kindness for him, and have so much knowledge of the place you would have for him, that I have my apprehension he will be very uneasy in it; and that when it is too late, you will be of my opinion, that it would have been much happier if he had been employed in any other place of profit and honour. I have formerly said so much to you on this subject and to so little purpose that I ought not now to have troubled you with all this, knowing very well that you rely on other people's judgments in this matter. I do not doubt but they wish him very well; but in this they have other considerations than his good, and I have none but that of a kind friend, that would neither have him nor my daughter uneasy. Writing this by candle light, I am so blind that I cannot read it, so that if there be anything in it that should not be seen, burn it and think kindly of one who loves you with all his heart."

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This third letter was written to the Duchess in 1703 when she wished him to oppose the Tory Bill against Occasional Conformity: "I do own a great deal of what you say is right; but I can by no means allow that all the Tory party are for King James, and consequently against the Queen, but the contrary; I think it is in her power to make use of almost all, but [except] some of the heads, to the true interests of England, which I take to be the Protestant succession, to the supporting of which, by the help of Almighty God, I will venture my last drop of blood. As you are the only body that could have given me happiness, I am the more concerned we should differ so much in opinion. But as I am firmly resolved never to assist any Jacobite whatsoever, or any Tory that is for persecution, I must be careful not to do the thing in the world which my Lord Rochester would most desire to have me do, which is to give my vote against this Bill [and his old Tory friends]; but I do most solemnly promise that I will speak to nobody living to be for it; and to show you that I would do anything that were not a ruin to the Queen, and an absolute destruction to myself, to make you easy, at this time by what has been told me, the Bill will certainly be thrown out, unless my Lord Treasurer and I will both speak to people and speak in the House, which I do assure you for myself I will not do."

This fourth to the Duchess belongs to 1706 and is again on the subject of Sunderland: "What you write me concerning the Queen and the Lord Treasurer gives me a great deal of trouble; for should the consequence be what you say, that there is no relying on the Tories,

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and that the Whigs will be out of humour, it must end in confusion, which will have the consequence of the Dutch making peace with France. I am afraid this is what will gratify many of the Tory party ; but I can see no advantage that can come to the Whigs by the ruin of the Lord Treasurer ; so that I hope they are too wise a people to expose themselves and the liberties of Europe because some things are not done with a good grace. I would not have you mistake me ; for as far as it is in my power, for the sake of my country and the Queen, for whom, had I a thousand lives, I would venture them all, I would have everything that is reasonable done to satisfy the Whigs, of which I think the Lord Treasurer is the best judge. If it were not for my duty to the Queen and friendship to Lord Treasurer, I should beg that somebody else might execute my office—not that I take anything ill, but that the weight is too great for me, and I find a decay in my memory. Whatever may be told to you of my looks, the greatest part of my hair is grey, but I think I am not quite so lean as I was.”

The next letter to the Duchess follows close on this one : “ I will frankly own to you that the jealousy some of your friends have that I and the Lord Treasurer do not act sincerely makes me so weary that, were it not for my gratitude to the Queen and concern for him, I would now retire, and never serve more. For I have had the good luck to deserve better from all Englishmen than to be suspected of not being in the true interest of my country, which I am in, and ever will be, without being of a faction ; and this principle shall govern me for the little remainder of my life. I must not think of being popular, but I

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shall have the satisfaction of going to my grave with the opinion of having acted as became an honest man ; and if I have your esteem and love, I shall think myself entirely happy. Having writ thus far, I have received your two letters of the 20th and 21st, which confirm me in my opinion before. And since the resolution is taken to vex and ruin the Lord Treasurer, because the Queen has not complied with what was desired for Lord Sunderland, I shall from henceforth despise all mankind, and think there is no such thing as virtue : for I know with what zeal the Lord Treasurer has pressed the Queen in that matter. I do pity him, and shall love him as long as I live, and never will be a friend to any that can be his enemy.

“ I have writ my mind very freely to the Queen on this occasion, so that whatever misfortune may happen, I shall have a quiet mind, having done what I thought my duty. And as for the resolution of making me uneasy, I believe they will not have much pleasure in that, for as I have not set my heart on having justice done me, I shall not be disappointed, nor will I be ill-used by any man.”

And this one is of the same set and year : “ I hope you will order it so, that after I have been some days at London we may go to the Lodge, and be quiet, for I am quite weary of the world ; and since I am afraid there is a necessity of my serving in this country [Flanders] as long as this war lasts, let me have a little more quiet in England than I have been used to have, and then I shall be the better able to go through what I must endure in this country ; for upon the success we have had this year [the year of Ramillies] our

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friends grow less governable than when they were afraid of the French. . . .

“ I have already more than once writ my mind very freely, so that my conscience is at ease, though my mind is very far from it ; for I did flatter myself that my zeal and sincerity for the Queen were so well known to her that my representations would have had more weight than I find they have. But nothing can ever hinder me from being ready to lay down my life when she can think it for her service, for I serve with an entire affection, as well as the utmost duty ; for you and I, and all ours, would be the most ungrateful people that ever lived if we did not venture all for her good. By this, do not mistake me ; for I am very sensible that if my Lord Treasurer be obliged to retire, I cannot serve in the Ministry. But when those projectors have put all in confusion, I shall then readily not only venture my life, but all that I have, to show my gratitude. When the express comes, by which I shall see all that has passed, I shall once more write, as becomes me, and will yet hope it may have its effect.”

The letter written to the Queen a week later was as follows : “ I have had the honour of your Majesty’s of the 27th and 1st of this month. The last has mortified and troubled me very much, since by it I see the little effect my letters have had with your Majesty, so that I was resolved to have been silent, till I should have had the honour of being near your person. But finding by the Lord Treasurer’s letter, as well as by others, that the measures you must take before the meeting of the Parliament will have the consequence of making everything go easy, or ruining your

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business, I could not avoid troubling you on this subject. The Lord Treasurer assures me that any other measures but those he has proposed must ruin your business, and oblige him to quit his staff, which would be a great trouble to him, and I am afraid will have the fatal consequence of putting you into the hands of a party which God only knows how you would then be able to get out of it. It is true that your reign has been so manifestly blessed by God that one might reasonably think you might govern without making use of the heads of either party, but as it might be easy to yourself. This might be practicable if both parties sought your favour, as in reason and duty they ought. But, madam, the truth is, that the heads of one party have declared against you and your government, as far as it is possible, without going into open rebellion. Now, should your Majesty disoblige the other, how is it possible to obtain near five millions for carrying on the war with vigour, without which all is undone? Your Majesty has had so much knowledge and experience yourself of the capacity and integrity of the Lord Treasurer that you cannot but know you may safely rely upon his advice, and if there be any opinions different from his, your Majesty will allow me to say, they neither know so much of these matters, nor can they judge so well of them.

“ I take the liberty of sending a copy of a letter the Lord Treasurer writ to me on the 13th of the last month. I shall repeat nothing in it, but earnestly desire you will once more read it. And as I would in return for your many favours die to make you and your government easy, makes me take the liberty, with all submission on my knees,

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to beg for your own sake, the good of your country, and all the liberties of Europe, that you would not lose one day in giving the Lord Treasurer that necessary assistance he thinks proper for carrying on of your business in Parliament, by which you will not only enable him to make your business go well, but also that of governing the only party that can be made use of. I am very confident the Lord Treasurer thinks he shall be able to govern them to your satisfaction, or he would not say as much as he does ; and, as for myself, I beg your Majesty's justice in believing that I shall take all the care I can to make them sensible of the obligations they have to you, so that you may never have reason to repent the measures, I hope in God, you will now take. I can have no ease nor quiet."

This letter to the Duchess shows another side of his importance and his sense of it. It belongs to 1708, the year of Oudenarde. " You say," he writes, " that Lord Sunderland has assured you that I may depend upon the friendship of the Whigs, if I will make it possible. You and Lord Sunderland may be assured that I have no intentions or thoughts but that of deserving well of England, and consequently must and will depend on the friendship of the Whigs ; and if my good intentions are not seconded with success, I think I shall have nothing justly to reproach myself withal, so that I may retire with quietness and honour.

" The siege of Lille, which was begun on Monday last, is of that consequence to France that I nowise doubt of their drawing all the troops that is in their power together to give us what disturbance they can. I pray God to bless this

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undertaking, and all others that may tend to the bringing of us to a safe and lasting peace, and then I will not put the visit of Lord Haversham to Abigail [Mrs. Masham] much to heart. But as that angry Lord has not for some years made any visit to any belonging to the Court, I think his visit to Abigail will not be much for her service, nor that of the Queen, since it must appear to all the world that she is the protectress of those who would destroy the Queen's ministers, which must occasion a great prejudice to her service.

“ But I think we are now acting for the liberties of all Europe, so that till this matter is a little more over, tho' I love the Queen with all my heart, I can't think of the business of England till this great affair is decided, which I think must be by another battle; for I am resolved to risk anything rather than suffer Brussels to be taken, though the number of this army is very much diminished by the siege. But I rely on the justness of our cause, and that God will not forsake us, and that he will continue to keep our troops in good heart, as they are at present. I beg you to be so kind and just as to be assured that my kindness for you is such that my greatest ambition is bounded in that of ending my days quietly with you.”

The last letter to the Duchess that I shall quote shows something of a religion as simple as his policy, and easier, because God, who was as much greater than he as he was greater than Anne, showed no special favour, as Anne did, to Harley and Mrs. Masham. “ Yesterday being thanksgiving day,” says he, “ I was in devotion, and earnestly hope God will forgive what is past and strengthen our hearts; so that for the time to come we may bear with patience the ingratitude

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we have met with, which he no doubt, in due time, will punish ; for we, I fear, have so justly merited his anger, but no ways have we deserved this usage from the Queen. We must look upon this correction of his as a favour, if it atones for our past actions. As I would not be a favourite, were it in my power, my daily prayers shall be that you and I might be so strengthened by His grace that the remainder of our lives might be spent in doing good, by which we might at last be acceptable to Him. You do not give any account of how you are going to pass this summer [1710] : I should hope it would be with your children, as much as possible, so that you might not be alone, which might give you so much occasion for the spleen. Whilst the Queen is at Windsor, I should think you should avoid being at the Lodge ; but pray do whatever shall make you most easy.”

In this letter to the Queen he prays God to direct her for her own good and that of Europe—that is to say, he prays that she may continue to employ him and Lord Treasurer Godolphin and not interfere with them. It dates from 1707 when Harley had risen and begun to shed darkness. “I beg the justice of you to believe,” he says, “that I am no ways concerned for the power that the Whigs may have with you, but the great concern that I must always have for your quiet and safety ; for if you are served to your satisfaction and security I am very indifferent who the persons are. And as you desire that I would speak freely, I do protest in the presence of God Almighty that I am persuaded that if you continue in the mind that I think you now are, and will not suffer those that have the honour to serve you to manage your affairs agreeably to the circumstances of the

times, your business must inevitably run into confusion, and consequently make it impossible for my Lord Treasurer to serve ; for if he is thought to have the power when he has not, both parties will be angry with him, though both would admire him and be his friends if he were out of the service. If I were with your Majesty I believe I could let you see the trouble and distraction you are like to be in this winter, which you must prevent before the meeting of Parliament or it will be too late.

“ I find the Duke of Savoy, Prince Eugene, the Elector of Hanover, and the Emperor are all desirous that you would be pleased to allow me to continue so long on this side the water as might be necessary for concerting the operations of the next campaign. This will make it impossible for me to be in England before the meeting of the Parliament ; and should I come at that time it might create jealousies on this side the water. But as I prefer your quiet and service above all other considerations, if your Majesty thinks my being with you, for one day or two, may be of any use I am ready to obey. If I come in a yacht one man of war should be ordered to Ostend, and not be told what it is for, for I would endeavour to be back with the army before the French should know I am gone for England. What I now propose will make so much noise that I beg you will be pleased to advise with my Lord Treasurer before you send me your commands.

“ It is impossible for me to finish this letter without assuring your Majesty of what I know of Lady Marlborough, that nobody could serve you with more zeal and true affection than she has

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done for many years ; and I must do her judgment that right, as to say, that she has foreseen some things which I thought would never have happened ; I mean concerning the behaviour of some in your service [Mrs. Masham]. I pray God to direct you in all things for your own good, and that of all Europe, that your own affairs may prosper and be glorious, as they have been for some years, and I shall then enjoy all the happiness and quiet that this world can give me.”

The three other letters to Anne which I shall quote all relate to his important task of keeping his place. The first was written in 1708, before the battle of Oudenarde. He did not scruple to remind Anne that he might die during the campaign : “ I must begin in observing to your Majesty that the town of Amsterdam, which has always been the most zealous for the carrying on of this war with vigour, has, as your Majesty may have seen by my former letter to Lord Treasurer, pressed me in two conferences, by their burgomaster and pensioner, for the making steps towards a peace, which I think not for the honour or interest of your character. I have reason to believe this change of theirs does not proceed from the apprehensions they have of France, but from what passed in England last winter, and from the continued intelligences they have of your Majesty’s being resolved to change hands and parties. They being sensible of the fatal consequences this may have in the next Parliament, is the true reason of their being earnest to have propositions of peace made this campaign.

“ As for England, I do not doubt but care is taken to incline your Majesty to believe that the

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Tories will have this next Parliament a majority in the House of Commons. But I beg your Majesty to consider, before it is too late, how that is possible after the attempt that has been made by France for the Pretender ; and that the greatest part of that party is suspected either to have known, or, at least, to have wished success to the attempt. Besides, their continual endeavours to incline the people to a peace which, in the circumstances we are in, can only tend to the lessening your Majesty, and, consequently, the advancement of the Pretender's interest.

“ This being the truth, how is it possible, madam, that the honest people of England, who wish well to you, and the carrying on of the war, can be prevailed upon to choose such men as they believe would ruin all that is dear to them ? If what I have the honour to write to your Majesty be the truth, for God's sake consider what may be the consequences of refusing the request of the Dukes of Newcastle and Devonshire, since it will be a demonstration not only to them, but to everybody, that Lord Treasurer and I have no credit with your Majesty, but that you are guided by the insinuation of Mr. Harley.

“ We are assured that the Duke of Burgundy is coming to the head of this army, with the King of France's leave, and orders to venture a battle. I shall be so far from avoiding it that I shall seek it, thinking it absolutely for your service ; so that God only knows whether this may not be the last I may have the honour to write to you, which makes me beg with the same earnestness as if I were sure it was to be my last, that your Majesty will let no influence or persuasion hinder

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you, not only in this, but in all your worldly affairs, to follow the advice and good counsel of Lord Treasurer, who will never have any thought but what is for your honour and true interest."

Unwounded at Oudenarde he was yet able to affect the Queen by alleging the effect of her letters had only been relieved by the battle. "The uneasiness of my mind," he writes, "upon receiving your Majesty's letters of the 18th and 22nd of June had such an effect upon my body as to make me very ill, but it pleased God to bless me with such good success, as in great measure recovered me; though my sickness before the battle, and the hurry in which I have been almost ever since, joined with the uneasiness of the subject, have hindered me from returning your Majesty an answer as soon as I ought to have done. I was glad to observe that the impressions which your Majesty seemed to have in yours of the 18th, of my Lord Sunderland's having made use of your name in his letters to Scotland, had been so far set right, by the assurances he gave you, as to let you see all possible endeavours had been used from thence to incense you against him. And though he may have done, upon that occasion, what your Majesty does not like, yet I beg leave to say, with all humility and duty to your Majesty, that I did flatter myself nobody could have prevailed with you to carry your resentment so far against him in my absence, as is mentioned in your letter, and to give me so great a mortification in the face of all Europe, at a time when I was so zealously endeavouring to serve you, at the hazard both of my reputation and of my blood. But though any consideration of me were wholly out

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of the case, I should think, for your own sake, you would suspend any further resentment in this matter till I have the honour to see you, and opportunity of thoroughly examining and discoursing upon it with your Majesty. For God's sake, madam, consider, that whatever may be said to amuse or delude you, it is utterly impossible for you to have ever more than a part of the Tories, and though you could have them all, their number is not capable of doing you good. These things are so plain that I can't doubt but your Majesty will be convinced nothing can be so fatal to your service as any way to discourage the Whigs, at this time when after the blessing of that victory, you may be sure that if you show a confidence in their zeal for your interests, they will all concur very cheerfully to make you great and happy as I wish. God Almighty bless and preserve you.

“ I had writ thus far before I had the honour of your Majesty's of the 13th, by Lord Stair, and as I shall always endeavour to deserve from your Majesty, so I shall never doubt of having your esteem and protection. Your Majesty might see, by the shortness of the letter that was shown you, that I was in great haste when I writ it, and my fulness of heart for your service made me use that expression. What I then meant, as I must always think is, that you can make no good use of this victory, nor of any other blessing, but by following the advice of my Lord Treasurer, who has been so long faithful to you ; for any other advisers do but lead you into a labyrinth, to play their own game at your expense. Nothing but your commands should have obliged me to say so much, having taken my resolution to suffer with

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you, but not to advise, being sensible that if there was not something very extraordinary your Majesty would follow the advice of those that have served you so long, faithfully and with success."

This was a letter drafted by the Duke but corrected by the Duchess, except the last paragraph which relates to his letter written to the Duchess immediately after Oudenarde. The Duchess had shown the letter to the Queen, and the Queen had not been as pleased as could have been wished with the phrase: "I do, and you must, give thanks to God for his goodness in protecting and making me the instrument of so much happiness to the Queen and nation, if she will please to make use of it." He had also in a letter to the Queen rubbed the same matter in, saying: "Your Majesty shall be convinced from this time that I have no ambition or anything to ask for myself or family; but I will end the few years which I have to live in endeavouring to serve you, and to give God Almighty thanks for his infinite goodness to me. But as I have taken this resolution to myself, give me leave to say, that I think you are obliged, in conscience and as a good Christian, to forgive, and to have no more resentments to any particular person or party, but to make use of such as will carry on this just war with vigour, which is the only way to preserve our religion and liberties, and the crown on your head; which that you may long enjoy and be a blessing to your people, shall be the constant wish and prayer of him that is with the greatest truth and duty. . . ."

The following long letter was drafted by Godolphin for Marlborough to send to the Queen

when she had been threatened with resignation by them both. She was sorry to find him “in such a splenetic way as to talk of retiring,” but at the same time she thought his desire to flood her with Whigs would “tear that little prerogative the Crown has to pieces.” Said Godolphin for Marlborough : “As to the reflections your Majesty is pleased to make upon my *real* inclination to retire, tho’ it be natural and very desirable, after one has lived a great many years in a hurry, to enjoy some quiet in one’s old age ; yet I will own freely to your Majesty my inclinations to retire proceed chiefly from finding myself incapable of being of any further use to your Majesty. The long and faithful services I have endeavoured to perform to your Majesty, and the goodness you had expressed to me upon several occasions, had created a general opinion, both abroad and at home, that your Majesty had placed entire trust and confidence in me ; and upon that fact I was the more capable of doing many great and effectual services, both here abroad, and in England. But your Majesty will give me leave to say, with all imaginable duty, that is now reduced singly to serving you at the head of the army this campaign ; for your Majesty having shown so publicly last winter and this spring, that you have no more trust and confidence in me, nor any reliance upon my opinion, but much more upon the opinion of those who have neither honesty nor capacity to serve you, and who visibly ruined your service last winter in several undeniable instances, nor no longer possible for me to be of any further use to you ; and to continue in your Council to advise, without credit enough to prevail with you to follow good advice, would only expose myself

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and my reputation in the world, by making myself answerable for other people's follies, or worse.

“ And by what your Majesty is pleased to say in your letter of the Lord Treasurer, tho' I have nothing so far as that from himself, I believe his opinion, and his reasons for that opinion, must be the same with mine. Your Majesty is pleased to think we should be blamed for quitting ; but, not to reflect upon that coldness, and that behaviour in yourself, which forces us to quit, by withdrawing your trust and confidence from us, to give it to insinuating, busy flatterers, who can't serve you for one month this winter without danger of being torn to pieces in the streets. I don't doubt but these things are very sensible to Lord Treasurer, as I am sure they are to me. However, I shall not trouble your Majesty any further with the consequences that must follow, since I find plainly by your Majesty's letter that all I have said and written hitherto is to no purpose, nor indeed, ever can be, while your Majesty's heart is possessed by all the false and malicious insinuations which are possible to be suggested by our enemies ; and, therefore, I shall conclude this head, with wishing your Majesty may find abler servants than we have been, more faithful and affectionate, I will beg leave to say, you never can.

“ As to the tyranny of the five [Whig] Lords, which you seem so much to apprehend, and so much desire that you might be kept out of their hands, if your Majesty were disposed to hearken to the advice of those who have supported you for almost seven years upon the throne, and much more before you came to it, you would be in no

danger of falling into any hands but ours, whom you did not, till very lately, care to think dangerous ; and certainly we are not altered. By a maxim I have often heard, that "interest cannot lie," we can have no other interest but your Majesty's, and to make your throne powerful and your government strong. But your Majesty will allow some people may have an interest to our prejudice ; they may have an interest to create difficulties every day in your Majesty's mind against us, and by that means to force us out of your service, and then, indeed, I am afraid you will be in very dangerous hands. But as to the five Lords, if your Majesty will be inclined to do great things only, as in themselves are not only just and reasonable, with regard to all that is past, but useful and necessary for all that is to come, your Majesty needs not to apprehend falling into other hands but ours, who have done you very many faithful services, and who, whatever return we are like to have for them, will never fail to pray for your Majesty's long life and prosperity."

The letter to Godolphin relates to the same agitations in the same tone. Thus the Duke wrote to the Treasurer during the troublesome year after Ramillies : " I am a good deal concerned at a letter I received by the last post from Lady Marlborough, in which she tells me that Mr. Harley has the entire confidence of the Queen. If she has good reason for this opinion, I can't but think there should be no time lost in speaking plainly to her Majesty, in letting her know what you and I think is her interest. If she be of another opinion, I think you and I should honestly let her know that we shall not be able to carry her business on with success, so that she might have

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time to take her measures with such as will be able to serve her. I shall always be ready to sacrifice myself for the prosperity of the Queen ; but I will not be thought to have credit, when her business is managed in a way which, in my opinion, must be her ruin. I beg you will let me know your thoughts on this matter, and what you think may be proper to be done ; for though I am weary of all sorts of business, I know her meaning is so sincerely honest that I would undergo any trouble or hazard that you think may do good. On the other side, if I can't do good, nothing can make me so happy as a quiet life."

To Sunderland a few weeks later he said nearly the same thing, dreading the surreptitious destruction of his policy, by the enemy abroad taking confidence from the power of the enemy at home. " I agree entirely with you," he says, " that the success the French have had is very discouraging ; and, if care be not taken in the manner you mention [by England taking spirited action to counterbalance the failure at Toulon], the consequences may be dangerous with Holland, for I have received very desponding letters from those parts. Either we were in the wrong in the beginning of the war, or we have reason to continue it with vigour, or content ourselves with losing our liberties, for the French are very insolent in success, notwithstanding their great desire for peace. If the allies continue firm this winter, I am of opinion the enemy will, at the entrance of the next campaign, venture a battle in this country, since they see that success in any other part of the world cannot give them peace.

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“ You may be sure I long extremely for quietness ; but, at the same time, I am very sensible that during this war I must continue in this galley. My great uneasiness is what I hear from England ; and my concern for the Lord Treasurer is such that, as a friend, I could wish he would take the resolution of retiring ; for, by the letters I receive, he will unavoidably be mortified, and consequently not be able to serve England with the success he has done hitherto. I do, with all my heart, wish England prosperity ; but if that cannot be, it would be some ease that it was not in the hands of Lord Treasurer. If you are of my opinion, I shall ever acknowledge it as a mark of your kindness to me if you advise him to make this step, for I am much more concerned for him than for myself.”

This next letter, of 1710, to Godolphin reflects his perplexity when his enemies at home were isolating him. “ I take the liberty,” he says, “ of putting several letters under your cover rather than to let the messenger deliver them ; that to the Lords you will give yourself, and for Lady Marlborough, from henceforward I shall send it always under your cover, for I hope she will not be prevailed upon to come to town ; for, in my opinion, the intercourse of letters between the Queen and herself has no other end than making things worse. The enclosed, which I send open, to the Duke of Shrewsbury, I leave it to your discretion of giving or not giving, for if he be afraid of living civilly with Lady Marlborough, I can have nothing to do with him ; on the other side, I think the consequence of preserving this Parliament is of so much consequence to the Queen and nation that I would omit nothing

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that could be in my power ; for I am as sure as I can be of anything in this world, that if this Parliament be broke, the Queen's glory and interest is lost, both in Holland and the Empire, the fatal consequences of which you can best judge ; so that let me, as a faithful friend, beg of you that if you can help this fatal step you will do it ; if not, that you will give demonstrations of its being contrary to your advice, so that when men shall return to their wits the true authors may meet with their reward. If you think it can be of any use you may let the Duke of Shrewsbury know my opinion of a new Parliament. This going by a safe hand, I do not make use of the cipher ; otherwise, I shall never fail, believing Mr. Harley has it in his power and inclinations to open my letters at the Post Office."

Still hoping to keep the peace, but ready to "throw away the scabbard" and "make some of their hearts ache," he wrote to Shrewsbury, as it fell out, in vain. "My age and circumstances," he said, "make me not capable of tasting much pleasure, yet the assurances of your esteem and friendship give me great satisfaction. I am of opinion with your Grace that her Majesty has not done this step to Lord Sunderland [dismissing him] with intention to mortify me ; but the world will consider him as my son. I shall speak very freely on this and everything else when I shall have the happiness [what happiness !] of being with you. I wish the time were nearer—I mean by my being able to return speedily with a peace ; but I fear the alarm which has been given so far encouraged our enemies, that they may less apprehend the continuance of the war, they having been always apt to flatter themselves. As I am

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convinced the Queen does not personally mean anything unkind to me in this change of Lord Sunderland, so you may assure yourself that my behaviour shall be governed by what I shall judge may be the most useful for hers and the public good. But nothing but time can convince the world of this truth, especially when an acquaintance of yours, I mean the Duke of Argyle, to the few discontented officers that go near him has, for some time, told them that the Queen was weary of my services, which would quickly appear by the removal of Lord Sunderland. God knows my heart, that the true reason of the resolution I have taken of staying at the head of the army is the tender concern I have for the Queen's interest ; for I am, as to my fortune, so at ease, that nothing would be more agreeable to myself than a retired life, for the little time I have to live ; and, upon my word, whenever her Majesty's services can permit it, you shall see me live very contented. . . ”

Diplomacy was the marrow of his bones.

Just before Godolphin's dismissal the Duke wrote to him : “ I am informed that Mr. Harley, in his conversations, keeps no sort of decency for you and me, by which it is plain that the Queen has no design of reconciling you and Mr. Harley, as was mentioned to me in a former letter. I know by the commission Mr. Cresset was charged with, what you and I are to expect. When I see you, you shall have particulars how I came to be informed of this business. When I tell you the whole I should think you would be of my opinion that it is impossible they should trust the Queen with their whole design, for it is for tying her hand and foot. I beg you will never mention this to

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anybody; for, though I think I shall have the glory of saving the Queen, she must know nothing of it; for she certainly would tell so much of it to Mrs. Masham and Mr. Harley that they would for the future order it so that I should not come to know, which, otherwise, I shall know, all that passes. I am very sensible of the hard usage I have met with; but my own honour, and my love for my country, must not suffer me to take anything ill of the Queen, but attribute my cruel usage to the influence of my enemies. Our extravagant behaviour in England has so encouraged the French that they take measures as if the war were but just beginning, so that our new ministers will be extremely deceived, for the greater desire they shall express for peace, the less they will have it in their power to obtain it. For our enemies live by no other hopes but that the allies will not have the same confidence which has hitherto been, but quarrel among themselves, which I pray God may not happen, and then everything must go well—I mean abroad.”

All but everything can be excused in one nurtured under Charles II and engaged without end in this kind of intrigue among men and nations similarly engaged. A letter to Godolphin, written when the Dutch were entertaining French overtures in 1705, gives some notion of the turbid waters in which he kept calm and clear. “You will observe,” says he, “that he [Heinsius, the Dutch Pensionary] reasons much more than formerly. The business itself is so very difficult that, let them have never so much mind [to a peace] they will not be able to bring it to perfection, for the people will never consent to what the French desire; so that I believe neither side dares speak

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plainly, for should the French offer what they have a mind to give, it might disgust the Spaniards, and the Dutch cannot make proposals, but they will inevitably disoblige their allies; so that I think we may depend upon another year's war.

“ I see you have a mind I should be in England, if possible, before the meeting of the Parliament. It will be uneasy to me, as things are, to be here; but some of my officers, already fearing I would take measures to leave the army as soon as possible, have represented to me that they fear, when I am gone, the French, knowing how little respect would be paid to an officer that shall be left to command, may not only attempt but succeed. However, be assured I shall turn my thoughts to be able to do what may be an ease to you. I am very sorry for what you tell me of 79 [cipher for the Queen]; but I am confident she esteems you more than all the rest that talk to her, and you may imagine she is pressed by people that do not judge so well as you, so that I pity her extremely. However, I hope and am sure she will always be directed by you in everything that is good for her service.”

Even victory had its drawbacks. After Blenheim he told Godolphin: “ I have been so employed about our own wounded men and the prisoners that I have not one hour's quiet, which has so disordered me that if I were in London I should be in my bed in a high fever. . . .

“ I am suffered to have so little time to myself that I have a continual fever on my spirits, which makes me very weak, but, when I go from hence, I am resolved to go in my coach till I come to the Rhine, which I do not doubt will restore me to

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perfect health. Nothing but my zeal for her Majesty's service could have enabled me to have gone through the fatigues I have had for the last three months ; and I am but too sure when I shall have the happiness of seeing you, you will find me ten years older than when I left England. I do not say this to complain, for I esteem myself very happy if I can make any return to her Majesty's goodness to me and mine."

I will conclude these selections with the Duke's reply to the Queen's letter of dismissal in 1712, the letter which he threw into the fire in anger : " Madam, I am very sensible of the honour your Majesty does me in dismissing me from your service by a letter of your own hand, though I find by it that my enemies have been able to prevail with your Majesty to do it in the manner that is most injurious to me. And if their malice and inveteracy against me had not been more powerful with them than the consideration of your Majesty's honour and justice, they would not have influenced you to impute the occasion of my dismissal to a false and malicious insinuation, contrived by themselves and made public when there was no opportunity for me to give in my answer, which they must needs be conscious would fully detect the falsehood and malice of their aspersions, and not leave them that handle for bringing your Majesty to such extremities against me.

"But I am much more concerned at an expression in your Majesty's letter, which seems to complain of the treatment you had met with. I know not how to understand that word, nor what construction to make of it. I know I have always endeavoured to serve your Majesty faithfully and zealously

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through a great many undeserved mortifications. But if your Majesty does intend, by that expression, to find fault with my not coming to the Cabinet Council, I am very free to acknowledge that my duty to your Majesty and country would not give me leave to join in the counsel of a man who, in my opinion, puts your Majesty upon all manner of extremities. And it is not my opinion only, but the opinion of all mankind, that the friendship of France must needs be destructive to your Majesty, there being in that Court a root of enmity irreconcilable to your Majesty's government and the religion of these kingdoms. I wish your Majesty may never find the want of so faithful a servant as I have always endeavoured to approve myself to you."

In the last sentence but one he says as much as he ever put into words of his policy. He was for the Queen's government and the country's religion: he was against France. Much as the letters show us of his manner they say nothing more of his policy. They are packed full of suspicions, contrivances and alarms. What lay behind we are left to guess. Something, no doubt, was omitted for diplomacy's sake, or from caution; for no man's letters were safe. More still, probably, was omitted because the policy could not easily be defined. The policy was Marlborough. William III's Court had been his finishing school, and, like William III, he saw France as the enemy to Europe, and, above all, to England and the Protestant succession. Beyond this he openly said nothing. Probably he could have said little more, even had he tried. For, as I say, the policy was just Marlborough's attitude in face of France and his English political enemies. He had to

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succeed. If only he and Godolphin could have shut up the Queen, Harley, Mrs. Masham, and perhaps the Duchess of Marlborough, he would have succeeded perfectly in imposing his policy, which was his will, upon the country. England, the Churchills, and himself—these three. . . . It was not necessary, if it was possible, to put so simple a policy into words. In the same way he does not reveal the enemy's policy, but simply the fact of their opposition: their schemes were to turn him out; they lay across his path only to upset him. He was England. They were the enemy. The one word he had for his policy when he wrote to the Queen was "your business." He continually spoke of himself as being "in business." England was his business, and in asking the Queen not to interfere with his friend Godolphin he explained that it was for "your own sake, the good of your country, and all the liberties of Europe." So simple was it. He laboured for the Queen, his country, Europe, and himself and family, with the help of "the only party that could be made use of." They had the honour to serve the Queen and "manage her affairs," as he says himself, "agreeably to the circumstances of the time." People at home might pass Bills for regulating fisheries, manufactures, trade, and taxation. But he in Flanders managed the Queen's affairs agreeably to the circumstances of the times, while his enemies attacked him and the war and attempted to ruin "all that was dear," as he said, to the people of England.



Marlborough
After Nicholas Vischer

XXIV : MALBROUK

THE world has made up its mind about Marlborough, and as he was neither hero nor saint, the world probably is right. He was a great soldier and diplomatist, and he was devoted to his wife, but he was neither honest nor generous. Had he not been mean the verdict might have been far different. Perhaps even that fault would have sunk out of sight if it had not been brought into relief by a very handsome person and a grace and charm which made meanness an unpardonable accompaniment. Also he has suffered in memory because he was not loved except by his wife. Admiration and envy he won, but not love. Kindly, tender and forgiving he was, but he did not live outside his family. He had great dignity without pride ; for, though he adorned any place, he would do anything to obtain it. So he was left friendless to the panegyrists, the satirists and the historians.

As a soldier he had every merit except that he was not original. He saw and foresaw. He acted swiftly and could hide his intentions from friends and enemies. Again and again he won by feinting and moving swiftly to a place where he was not expected. Waiting never wore him out, yet his patience was equalled by his energy in delivering, at the critical moment or at the end, heavy blows with his cavalry. No enemy ever beat him in the field or compelled

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him to raise a siege ; he was taken by surprise perhaps once. And as he had both patience and energy, so he was both cool and brilliant under fire and strain. His friends were alarmed at the way he exposed himself, but though he was unhorsed, nearly captured, and lost friends at his side, he never had a wound after he was a young man. The soldiers could not help liking such a commander. " Corporal John " they called him. He seems to have thought more of them sick or wounded than other generals. As to discipline, there is a story suggesting that he made many offences punishable, but often remitted the punishments out of kindness.

He never speaks of enjoying a campaign, but after his youth there was nothing he enjoyed more unless it was imagining the relief of being quiet at home. In the field he was under nobody, not even the Duchess. All that he knew could be employed, and the pursuit engrossed him till the victory was won, and his eyes were sore and his head ached and he missed his sleep. Towards the end he mentions dreading the sound of firing, and his sensitiveness recalls the impression he made as Cleveland's lover—that with that slender figure and languor he would not keep the place long. A little of the artist may be observed in him, for example, in the amendments he made in a letter drafted by his Secretary, altering " inferred " to " thought," " alleviate " to " lessen," " sympathising " to " partaking," " deviate " to " depart." He was never clumsy. When he heard of Guiscard's attack on Harley with a penknife, he blessed God that the Queen escaped, and hoped " Mr. Harley will long enjoy the honour of being first aimed at." He fell

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perhaps something short of being robust, but discretion and his liking for the game kept him well through ten campaigns between the ages of fifty-one and sixty-one.

Apart from war, but not far apart, his great gift was diplomacy. Nature had given him an eye for men and a hand for managing them, and the Court of Charles the Second had shown him the men. While he was still a young man the woman who became his wife mastered him, and he had no other intimacy. To treat a friend as a possible enemy, and an enemy as a possible friend, was natural to him. If people felt this so as not to like him, yet they could not resist him and his grace. It was that greatest gift of the ambitious—a natural ease and freedom of manner beyond all politeness—a grace that grew side by side with his knowledge of men, and was part of it. He used it, no doubt, chiefly for its own sake and as part of the ordinary course of life, but also for his own ends, or for his country's, which were much the same when he was plenipotentiary extraordinary in Europe and practically ruler of England. When once he had this great power, which he had a foretaste of under James and an unsatisfied ambition for under William, he could not relinquish it. It compensated him for his friendlessness. It brought him great wealth, but wealth was not his aim, and though his caution made him miserly and ridiculous to others, it did not master him. His aim was to satisfy the pleasure which he took in winning and ruling. No wonder the Jacobites in Paris were upset in 1714 when they heard that he was returning to England, for he was never on the losing side. He watched, he waited, and if necessary he begged

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and besought, appealed to the Queen's gratitude, reminded her of his faithful and disinterested services, insinuated that he would not live long—anything, however pathetic. "It is pretty hard to me to give an honest answer," he said on one occasion.

Truth also was one of the possible weapons of the statesman, nor did he disdain it, but he subordinated it to the desire to please and give "right impressions." On the other hand, he seldom spoke ill of anyone, whether it was the truth or not. Partly the difficulty may be a matter of style. They wrote extravagantly. Marlborough would say that he would willingly die a thousand deaths for the Queen's sake.

Once, when he was reporting that the Princess Anne was resolved with God's help to suffer all extremities, even to death itself, rather than change her religion, he said that he also, though he could not live a saint, could show the resolution of a martyr. It was in an overture made to William of Orange while James was being betrayed. The assertion was not put to the proof. No one in England at that time was ever even invited to die for his religion. But no one doubts that Marlborough held sincerely to the religion of the Church of England. The church was part of the country, and without the country he could be nothing. It was part of the scheme of things which smiled at him from the time he met the Duchess of Cleveland onwards. For a time he was even inclined to attack those who only occasionally conformed to the church for the sake of holding office, but this unbecoming excess he gave up on resorting to the Whig party which had to consider Nonconformists. He remained,

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however, perfectly serene. God, he said, had made him the instrument of doing the Queen some service. But he did not exaggerate the importance of God. For after repeating that he was doing his best for Anne and England, and complaining that he was not being properly treated in return, he said that he should be “wanting to himself and ungrateful to God Almighty” if he did not retire soon and leave the country to go its own way to heaven. He saw “the hand of God” in each campaign. When his political enemies seemed to prosper, he said that his prospect would be dreadful if “I did not trust in Him.” He prayed to God to strengthen his heart that he might bear ingratitude patiently—the Queen’s ingratitude, “which He, no doubt, in due time will punish.” Sometimes he consoled himself and the Duchess with the reflection that in all ages the best have been ill-used: “If we can be so happy as to behave ourselves so as to have no reason to reproach ourselves, we may then despise what rage and faction do.” That he ever reproached himself is not probable. “You and I,” he wrote to the Duchess after their son’s death in 1703, “have great reason to bless God for all we have, so that we must not repine at his taking our poor child from us; and I do beseech him with all my heart and soul, that he would comfort and strengthen both you and me, not only to bear this, but any other correction he shall think fit to try on us. The use, I think, we should make of this correction is, that our chiefest time should be spent in reconciling ourselves to him, and having in our minds always that we may not have long to live in this world. I do not mean by this that we should live retired from the world; for I am

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persuaded that, by living in the world, one may do much more good than by being out of it, but at the same time to live so as that one should cheerfully die when it shall be his pleasure to call for us. I am very sensible of my own frailties ; but if I can be ever so happy as to be always with you, and that you comfort and assist me in these thoughts, I am then persuaded I should be as happy and contented as it is possible to be in this world ; for I know we should both agree, next to our duty to God, to do what we ought for the Queen's service."

Whether we call this the religion of the Church of England or the " religion of all sensible men," or, better still, the religion of successful men, plain it is that he worshipped the God of Jacob with an easy, natural confidence and expectation. The Lord was on his side, and he knew it. Without this God, Whose name was so much upon his lips, as without his country, he would have been nothing at all. He may be said to have been born a patriot and a religious man, and to have remained in those matters as he was in the beginning. By fighting for the policy and religion of his country he gained honours and £50,000 a year, founded a family, and earned the envy of his greatest opponent, Marshal Villars, who lived on plundering the enemy.

His victories revived the military fame of this nation. In the words of his French biographer, he did more than anyone else, by his diplomacy and generalship, to " reduce the laurels of Louis XIV to powder." If he and Western Europe in arms did not crush France, it was because it was impossible. France was united and one. The allies were half-a-dozen. They may have thought Louis

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a treacherous tyrant whose ambition menaced Europe, but each fought for his own and was never satisfied with what the others did, however many "good words" Marlborough gave them all round. For the Lord was on Louis' side also, and, for some generations yet, on his family's side. Otherwise, Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet would have done more than give England the glory which used to belong to France, and Marlborough the name of perhaps the greatest English soldier. The very perfection of his success—to have not a defeat to his credit—has robbed his reputation of glamour, as his character for treachery and covetousness has dulled it, leaving him just the generalissimo of generalissimos, in armour and a wig, a not quite living figure compared with his termagant Duchess.

But, like Wellington, he has passed into mythology. Men in the South Sea Islands tell the story of Wellington and Napoleon as if they had been kings of chivalry. The Duke of Marlborough was sung, perhaps in his lifetime, after the same fashion, and in France. It is a mistake to say of "Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre," as Gustave Masson does in his note in *La Lyre Francaise*, that the French, not being able to vanquish the Duke, avenged themselves by composing this song upon him. For the hero of it is a knight whose lady goes up to the summit of her tower to watch for his returning and has the news of his death brought to her by a page in black. The page had seen Malbrouk's funeral, and men bearing his sword and shield, and others planting rosemary about the tomb, and heard the nightingale singing from the tree top, and seen the spirit flitting away among the laurels, and then the crowd rising up

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to hymn the victories of his lifetime, and so to bed, the married men with their wives, the rest by themselves—though there were plenty of maidens, too, fair ones, dark ones, and nut-brown ones. No English prose or verse has done so great or so curious an honour to the great Duke.

But it is more than doubtful whether the song was “composed upon” the Duke of Marlborough. It has the appearance of being far older than 1709, the year of Malplaquet, to which it is sometimes attributed. In outline and in some of its phrases it resembles the “Mort du Duc de Guise,” which dates from about 1563. Its flavour is mediæval. It has been alleged that it comes down from the age of the Crusades, when it had a hero named Mambron; and the similarity of Malbrouk, Malbroug, or Marlborough, may have been sufficient to suggest the transformation. An English officer has stated that the tune of it was the only one which excited the natives when played by our regimental bands in Egypt. One writer (like the last, in *Notes and Queries*) says that the Arabs sing it; another that it took root in the East and is to be heard in many an Oriental city, while the Fellaheen claim it as their own. This much seems likely—that the ballad is very old, and has been modified, possibly in the name of the hero only, to suit different occasions in the course of history. The least acceptable suggestion as to its authorship is that Madame de Sevigné wrote it. She might well have wished to.

The earliest reputed connection of the song with Marlborough is not probable. It is said to have been hurled at the English by some French troops besieged in the Netherlands in 1705. If it were true, gentler weapon was never hurled. Less

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improbable is the story that it was brought back to France and spread among the villages by Villars' soldiers after Malplaquet, that terrible victory, where Prince Eugene was wounded and so many English died, but not Marlborough. I have not found that it was printed in that year. At the British Museum the earliest copies of the song are dated 1775 and 1785.

As early as 1715, John Mackqueen, in a book called *British Valour triumphing over French Courage*, says that, "as masters and parents in Turkey were wont to fright their children and servants, and neighbours were wont to threaten one another in those days, with the name of Huniades, so the very name of Marlborough was for the same purpose applied." But this can hardly refer to the song, which is no more frightful than laughable. It came first fully into the light of day and of Paris in 1781, when Marie Antoinette gave birth to the Dauphin of France. For a peasant nurse, Madame Poitrine, granddaughter perhaps of a veteran from Malplaquet, sang it to the Royal child. The air caught on. Versailles hummed it. The street took it up. Articles of food and clothing were named after it. It was used in the "Mariage de Figaro" of Beaumarchais. Goethe heard it so much in France that he grew to hate the hero whose name was drilled into his head thus. And England welcomed it. A Frenchman was reported to have found his way to Marlborough Street by whistling it. Only the fall of the Bastille, says one, could drown the tune. But it did not. Napoleon, according to legend, sang it aloud as he got on horseback at the beginning of a campaign. The historians who wrote Marlborough's life at his command

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in 1806, have put it on record that the Duke's name rang in their ears daily, repeated without ceasing by children and nurses, who afflicted them with the song, a grotesque one, indeed, and ridiculous, but nevertheless a genuine echo of fame. That Napoleon, who admired Marlborough, should sing the song, seemed to one writer to prove that its hero was a later and inferior Duke. So blind are some to the devious ways of popular fame.

In 1865, and I daresay much later, the ballad was sold in Paris as a broadside with illustrations. As to the air, its life in England depends on its illegitimate association with the words of "For he's a jolly good fellow" and "We won't go home till morning." These, for all I know, may be the sentiments which it conveys in Alexandria and all the East. His Grace, a man of clear sense and no literature, must be astonished, with all his urbanity, when he hears this kind of echo in the Elysian fields. But the Duchess frankly despised poetry. *Mironton, mironton, mirontaine.*

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